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A SHORT HISTORY OF FREETHOUGHT

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DID SHAKESPEARE WRITE "TITUS ANDRONICUS"?

A SHORT HISTORY
OF
FREETHOUGHT

ANCIENT AND MODERN

JOHN M. ROBERTSON

SECOND EDITION, REWRITTEN AND GREATLY ENLARGED

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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TO
SYDNEY ANSELL GIMSON

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

ALTHOUGH the first edition of this work, consisting of 1,000 copies, was exhausted within a year of its publication (1899), it has not been reprinted, by reason of the author's dissatisfaction with its incompleteness. Originally planned as a mere sketch, reproducing a course of lectures, it approached, in the process of writing, somewhat to the character of a detailed and precise though curt record. Its omissions, however, were still so numerous that the author, on retrospect, determined to re-write the work before re-issuing it. The new edition, accordingly, is greatly expanded in every section, by many hundreds of specific additions. A number of chapters are more than doubled in length, new chapters are inserted, and the book, which now appears in two volumes, is more than twice its former size, though, the author hopes, it still preserves the character of condensation. At the same time it has of course been scrupulously revised with regard to accuracy.

That it is still an inadequate survey of a great field, no one, perhaps, knows much better than the author. The scheme, even when limited as far as may be by a tolerably strict definition, involves some approach to an outline of the history of human progress on the side of the intellectual life ; and the immensity of that undertaking may be inferred from the fact that the late Lord Acton, a prodigy of erudition, who spent many years of his life in gathering materials for a "History of Liberty,"

died without beginning to compile it. It seems better to put forth even a slight record, of a connected kind, written from a sociological standpoint, than to wait for the advent of one who shall unite with Lord Acton's learning and more untrammelled sympathies the productive industry of the hardly less learned Mr. Lea. The author has found even his own first sketch a help—by way of skeleton—towards the arrangement of a larger amount of material ; and he is fain to hope that some more leisured student may find the present recast not wholly useless towards a greater end. Every year, the literature of the subject extends ; and while this edition has been passing through the press the author has met with new or recent works which, had he been able to utilise them, would probably have enabled him to improve some sections. Among these may be named *La Critique des traditions religieuses chez les grecs*, by Professor Paul Decharme ; Professor Parker's *China and Religion*, and Dr. Hubert Röck's *Der Unverfälschte Sokrates*.

The main difficulty in historical writing is arrangement ; and the author is conscious of being often hard pressed by it in the following survey. There is at least some improvement in the present edition ; and where a strictly chronological order is not adopted, it is generally in consideration of the countervailing advantages from another arrangement.

What was most often complained of as defective in the first edition—the chapter on freethought in the nineteenth century—was relatively scanty for the two sufficient reasons that the extent of the subject-matter made impossible, in a “short” history, any save a generalised treatment, and that a highly qualified student was, to the writer's knowledge, engaged on a detailed record. The same reasons still subsist ; and

the chapter, though expanded like the others, remains relatively brief, the author being of opinion that, while a complete separate history is clearly a desideratum, the account given of the crowded nineteenth century need not in a general survey be so fully particularised as that of previous periods, the intellectual history of which is much less generally accessible. Indeed, any larger scale of treatment would easily have carried the present work into a third volume.

The author has to thank several friends for pointing out inaccuracies in the first edition—an assistance hardly ever rendered by hostile critics. And specially he has to thank Mr. Ernest Newman for a species of laborious service repeatedly received at the same hands—that of a careful reading of the proofs.

November, 1905.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

SHORT histories are perhaps not among the best of disciplines ; and the History of Freethought is at least as hard to write justly or master intelligently in short compass as any other. At the same time, the concise history, which is a different thing from the epitomes denounced by Bacon, has its advantages ; and I have striven in this case to guard somewhat against the disadvantages by habitual citation of authorities, and by the frequent brief discussion, in paragraphs in smaller type, of disputed and theoretical matters. These discussions can be skipped by the unleisured reader, and weighed by the student, at pleasure, the general narrative in larger type going on continuously.

Such a book could not be written without much use of the works of specialists in the history of religion and philosophy, or without debt to many other culture-historians. These debts, I think, are pretty fully indicated in the notes ; from which it will also appear, I hope, that I have striven to check my authorities throughout, and to make the reader aware of most occasions for doubt on matters of historic fact. The generalisation of the subject-matter is for the most part my own affair. I must acknowledge, however, one debt which would not otherwise appear on the face of the book—that, namely, which I owe to my dead friend, J. M. Wheeler, for the many modern clues yielded by his *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, a work which stands for an amount of

nomadic research that only those who have worked over the ground can well appreciate.

Among the many difficulties which press on the writer of such a work as the present, is that of setting up a standard of inclusion and exclusion. Looking back, I am conscious of some anomalies. It would on some counts have been not inappropriate, for instance, to name as a practical freethinker LEONARDO DA VINCI, who struck out new paths on so many lines of science. On the other hand, one might be accused of straining the evidence in claiming as a freethinker a man not known to have avowed any objection to the teaching of the Church. Difficulties arise, again, in the case of such a writer as CARDAN, who figured for orthodox apologists as a freethinker, but who seems to make more for credulity than for rational doubt ; and in the case of such a writer as the pro-ecclesiastical CAMPANELLA, who, while writing against atheism, and figuring only in politics as a disturber, reasons on various issues in a rationalistic sense. I can but press the difficulty of drawing the line, and admit ground for criticism. It has been remarked by Reuss that Paulus, a professed rationalist, fought for the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the very year in which Tholuck, a recon-verted evangelical, gave up the Pauline authorship as hopeless ; that when Schleiermacher, a believer in inspiration, denied the authenticity of the Epistle to Timothy, the rationalist Wegscheider opposed him ; and that the rationalist (of a sort) Eichhorn maintained the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch long after the supernaturalist Vater had disproved it.¹ Analogous anomalies will be found noted in our text ; but it cannot be pretended that all even of the prominent cases of

¹ Reuss, *History of the Canon*, Eng. trans. 1890, p. 387.

incidental freethinking on the part of the nominally orthodox are recorded ; and I cannot pretend to be able to detect all the cases of undue conservatism among the professed freethinkers. It must suffice to try to note the general movement.

Another anomaly to be apologised for is the inconsistency in the spellings of some Greek and other proper names. My first intention was to spell all courageously after the originals ; but, like so many others, I found myself constrained to compromise. Mr. John Owen, I find, had the courage for PYRRHON and ZENON, but not for PLATON. It is easy to write SOKRATES ; but if we speak of LOUKIANOS we are apt to miss, with many readers, the first purpose of history. It had perhaps been better, in such a work as the present, to abide by all the old conventions, grievous as they often are.

The relative brevity with which the manifold free-thought of the nineteenth century is treated in the concluding chapter has been a disquietude to me, and may be to some readers a grievance. It was, however, quite impossible for me to exceed a summary account without entirely over-balancing the volume ; and on all accounts the history of rationalism in the modern scientific period seems to need a volume to itself. Despite much labour spent on scrutiny, there doubtless remain in the following chapters only too many errors and oversights. Any specifications of these will be gratefully received.

April, 1899.

A Short History of Freethought

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY

§ 1. *Origin and Meaning of the Word.*

THE words "freethinking" and "freethinker" first appear in English literature about the end of the seventeenth century, and seem to have originated there and then, as we do not find them earlier in French or in Italian,¹ the only other modern literatures wherein the phenomena for which the words stand had previously arisen.

The title of "atheist" had been from time immemorial applied to every shade of serious heresy by the orthodox, as when the early Christians were so described by the image-adoring polytheists around them; and in Latin Christendom the term *infidelis*, translating the *ἀπίστος* of the New Testament, which primarily applied to Jews and pagans, was easily extensible, as in the writings of Augustine, to all who challenged articles of ordinary Christian belief, all alike being regarded as consigned to perdition.² The label of "deist," presumably self-applied by the bearers, begins to come into use in French about the middle of the sixteenth century;³ and that of "naturalist," also presumably chosen by those who bore it, came into currency about the same time. Lechler traces the latter term in the Latin form as far back as the MS. of the *Heptaplomeres* of Bodin, dated 1588; but it was common before that date, as De Mornay in the preface to his *De la Vérité de la religion Chrétienne*

¹ Cp. Lechler, *Geschichte des englischen Deismus*, 1841, p. 458; A. S. Farrar, *Critical History of Freethought*, 1862, p. 588; Larousse's *Dictionnaire*, art. LIBRE PENSÉE; Sayous, *Les déistes anglais et le Christianisme*, 1882, p. 203.

² Cp. Luke xii. 46; Tit. i, 15; Rev. xxi, 8.

³ Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, art. VIRET, *Note D*.

(1581) declaims "against the false naturalists (that is to say, professors of the knowledge of nature and natural things)"; and Montaigne in one of his later essays (1588) has the phrase "*nous autres naturalistes*."¹ Apart from these terms, those commonly used in French in the seventeenth century were *esprit fort* and *libertin*, the latter being used in the sense of a religious doubter by Corneille, Molière, and Bayle.²

It seems to have first come into use as one of the hostile names for the "Brethren of the Free Spirit," a pantheistic and generally heretical sect which became prominent in the thirteenth century, and flourished widely, despite destructive persecution, till the fifteenth. Their doctrine being antinomian, and their practice often extravagant, they were accused by Churchmen of licentiousness, so that in their case the name *Libertini* had its full latitude of application. In the sixteenth century the name of Libertines is found borne, voluntarily or otherwise, by a similar sect, probably springing from some remnant of the first, but calling themselves *Spirituales*, who came into notice in Flanders, were favoured in France by Marguerite of Navarre, sister of Francis I., and became to some extent associated with sections of the Reformed Church. They were attacked by Calvin in the treatise *Contre la secte fanatique et furieuse des Libertins* (1544 and 1545).³ The same name of *Libertini* was in time either fastened on or adopted by the main body of Calvin's opponents in Geneva. They were accused by him of general depravity, a judgment not at all to be acquiesced in, in view of the controversial habits of the age; though they probably included antinomian Christians and libertines in the modern sense, as well as orthodox lovers of freedom and orderly non-Christians. As the first Brethren of the Free Spirit, so-called, seem to have appeared in Italy (where they are supposed to have derived, like the Waldenses, from the immigrant Paulicians of the Eastern Church), the name *Libertini* presumably originated there. But in Renaissance Italy an unbeliever seems usually to have been called simply *ateo*, or *infedele*, or *pagano*. "The standing phrase was *non aver fede*."⁴

¹ *Essais*, liv. iii, ch. 12. Édit. Firmin-Didot, 1882, ii, 518.

² See F. T. Perrens, *Les Libertins en France au xviie. Siècle*, 1896, Introd. § 11, for a good general view of the bearings of the word. It stood at times for simple independence of spirit, apart from religious freethinking. Thus Madame de Sevigné (Lettre à Mme. de Grignan, 28 Juin, 1671) writes: "Je suis *libertine*, plus que vous." Voltaire in the next century commonly uses the substantive "*franc-pensant*," which later gave way to "*libre-penseur*."

³ Stähelin, *Johannes Calvin*, 1863, i, 383 sq.; Perrens as cited, pp. 5-6; Mosheim, *Eccles. Hist.*, 13 Cent., Part ii, ch. v, §§ 9-12, and notes; 14 Cent., Part ii, ch. v, §§ 3-5; 16 Cent., § 3, Part ii, ch. ii, §§ 38-42.

⁴ Burckhardt, *Renaissance in Italy*, Eng. tr. ed. 1892, p. 542, note.

In England, as late as Elizabeth's reign, "infidel" seems to have commonly signified only a Jew or heathen or Mohammedan, being used only in that sense by the pre-Shakspearean poets and dramatists and by Shakspeare, as by Milton in his verse. Milton, however, uses it in the modern sense in his prose; and it was at times so used even by early Elizabethans.¹ Hooker (1553-1600), in his Fifth Sermon, § 9,² uses the word somewhat indefinitely, but in his margin makes "Pagans and Infidels" equivalent to "Pagans and Turks." So also, in the *Ecclesiastical Polity*,³ "infidels" means men of another religion. On the title-page of Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1574), on the other hand, we have "the infidelitie of atheists"; but so late as 1600 we find "J. H.," the translator of Augustine's *City of God*, rendering *infideles* and *homines infideles* by "unbelievers."⁴

In England, as in the rest of Europe, however, the phenomenon of freethought had existed, in specific form, long before it could express itself in propagandist writings, or find any generic name save those of atheism and infidelity; and the process of naming was as fortuitous as it generally is in matters of intellectual evolution. In 1667 we find Sprat, the historian of the Royal Society, describing the activity of that body as having arisen or taken its special direction through the conviction that in science as in warfare better results had been obtained by a "free way" than by methods not so describable.⁵ As Sprat is careful to insist, the members of the Royal Society, though looked at askance by most of the clergy⁶ and other pietists, were not as such to be classed as unbelievers, the leading members being strictly orthodox; but a certain number seem to have shown scant concern for religion;⁷ and while it was one of the Society's first rules not to debate any theological question

¹ If Mr. Froude's transcript of a manuscript can here be relied on. *History*, ed. 1872, xi, 199.

² *Works*, ed. 1850, ii., 752.

³ B. V, ch. i, § 3. *Works*, i, 429.

⁴ *De civitate Dei*, xx, 30, *end*; xxi, 5, *beginn.*, etc.

⁵ *History of the Royal Society*, 1667, p. 73. Describing the beginnings of the Society, Sprat remarks that Oxford had at that time many members "who had begun a free way of reasoning" (p. 53).

⁶ Buckle, *Introd. to Hist. of Civ. in Eng.*, 1-vol. ed. p. 211.

⁷ Sprat, p. 375 (printed as 367).

whatever,¹ the intellectual atmosphere of the time was such that some among those who followed the "free way" in matters of natural science would be extremely likely to apply it to more familiar problems.² At the same period we find Spinoza devoting his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670) to the advocacy of *libertas philosophandi*; and such a work was bound to have a general European influence. It was probably, then, a result of such express assertion of the need and value of freedom in the mental life that the name "freethinker" came into English use in the last quarter of the century.

Before "deism" came into English vogue, the names for unbelief, even deistic, were simply "infidelity" and "atheism"—e.g., Bishop Fotherby's *Atheomastix* (1622), Baxter's *Unreasonableness of Infidelity* (1655), and *Reasons of the Christian Religion* (1667) *passim*. Bishop Stillingfleet's *Letter to a Deist* (1677) appears to be the first published attack on deism by name. His *Origines Sacrae* (1662) deals chiefly with deistic views, but calls unbelievers in general "atheists." Cudworth, in his *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (written 1671, published 1678), does not speak of deism, attacking only atheism, and was himself suspected of Socinianism. W. Sherlock, in his *Practical Discourse of Religious Assemblies* (2nd ed., 1682), attacks "atheists and infidels," but says nothing of "deists." That term, first coined in French, seems first to have found common currency in France—e.g., on the title-pages of the apologetic works of Marin Mersenne, 1623 and 1624. The term atheist was often applied at random at this period; but atheism did exist.

When the orthodox Boyle pushed criticism in physical science under such a title as *The Sceptical Chemist*, the principle could not well be withheld from application to religion; and it lay in the nature of the case that the name "freethinker," like that of "sceptic," should come to attach itself specially to those who doubted where doubt was most resented and most resisted. At length the former term became specific.

¹ *Id.*, p. 83. The French Academy had the same rule.

² Some of Sprat's uses of the term have a very general sense, as when he writes (p. 87) that "Amsterdam is a place of Trade without the mixture of men of freer thoughts." The latter is an old application, as in "the free sciences" or "the liberal arts."

In the meantime the word "rationalist," which in English has latterly tended to become the prevailing name for freethinkers, had made its appearance, without securing much currency. In a London news-letter dated October 14th, 1646, it is stated, concerning the Presbyterians and Independents, that "there is a new sect sprung up among them, and these are the *rationalists*; and what their reason dictates to them in Church or State stands for good until they be convinced with better."¹ On the Continent, the equivalent Latin term (*rationalista*) had been applied about the beginning of the century to the Aristotelian humanists of the Helmstadt school by their opponents,² apparently in the same sense as that in which Bacon used the term *rationales* in his *Redargutio Philosophiarum*—"Rationales autem, araneorum more, telas ex se conficiunt." Under this title he contrasts (as spiders spinning webs out of themselves) the mere Aristotelean speculators, who framed *à priori* schemes of Nature, with empiricists, who "like ants, collect something and use it"; preferring to both the "bees" who should follow the ideal method prescribed by himself.³ There is here no allusion to heterodox opinion on religion. [Bishop Hurst, who (perhaps following the *Apophthegms*) puts a translation of Bacon's words, with "rationalists" for *rationales*, as one of the mottoes of his *History of Rationalism*, is thus misleading his readers as to Bacon's meaning.] In 1661 John Amos Comenius, in his *Theologia Naturalis*, applies the name *rationalista* to the Socinians and deists; without, however, leading to its general use in that sense. Later we shall meet with the term in English discussions between 1680 and 1715, applied usually to rationalising Christians; but as a name for opponents of orthodox

¹ Cited by Archbishop Trench, *The Study of Words*, 19th ed. p. 230, from the *Clarendon State Papers*, App. vol. ii, p. 40.

² Art. RATIONALISMUS AND SUPERNATURALISMUS in Herzog and Plitt's *Real-Encyk. für prot. Theol. und Kirche*, 1883, xii, 509.

³ *Philosophical Works of Bacon*, ed. Ellis and Spedding, iii, 583. See the same saying quoted among the *Apophthegms* given in Tenison's *Baconiana* (Routledge's ed. of *Works*, p. 895).

religion it was for the time superseded, in English, by "freethinker."

The first certain instance thus far noted of the use of the term "freethinker" is in a letter of Molyneux to Locke, dated April 6th, 1697,¹ where Toland is spoken of as a "candid free-thinker." In an earlier letter, dated December 24th, 1695, Molyneux speaks of a certain book on religion as somewhat lacking in "freedom of thought";² and in Burnet's *Letters*³ occurs the expression "men.....of freer thoughts." In the *New Dictionary* a citation is given from the title-page of S. Smith's brochure, *The Religious Impostor.....dedicated to Doctor S-l-m-n and the rest of the new Religious Fraternity of Freethinkers, near Leather-Sellers' Hall. Printed.....in the first year of Grace and Free-thinking*, conjecturally dated 1692. It is thought to refer to the sect of "Freeseekers" mentioned in Luttrell's *Brief Historical Relation* (iii, 56) under date 1693. In that case it is not unbelievers that are in question. So in Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue* (first ed. 1699) the expression "freethought" has a general and not a particular sense;⁴ and in Baker's *Reflections upon Learning*, also published in 1699, in the remark: "After the way of freethinking had been lai'd open by my Lord Bacon, it was soon after greedily followed";⁵ the reference is, of course, to scientific and not to religious thought.

But in Shaftesbury's *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* (1709) the phrases "free-writers" and "a free-thought"⁶ have reference to "advanced" opinions, though in his letters to Ainsworth (May 10th, 1707) he had written, "I am glad to find your love of reason and *freethought*. Your piety and virtue I know you will always keep."⁷ Compare the *Miscellaneous Reflections* (v, 3) in the *Characteristics*⁸ (1711), where the tendency to force the sense from the general to the special is incidentally illustrated. Shaftesbury however includes the term "free liver" among the "naturally honest appellations" that have become opprobrious.

In Swift's *Sentiments of a Church of England Man* (1708) the specialised word is found definitely and abusively connoting religious unbelief: "The atheists, libertines, despisers of religion—that is to say, all those who usually pass under the name of freethinkers"; Steele and Addison so use it in the

¹ *Some Familiar Letters Between Mr. Locke and Several of his Friends*, 1708, p. 190.

² *Id.* p. 133.

³ Ed. Rotterdam, 1686, p. 195.

⁴ B. II, pt. ii, § 1.

⁵ Ch. on Logic, cited by Professor Fowler in his ed. of the *Novum Organum*, 1878, introd. p. 118.

⁶ §§ 3 and 4.

⁷ *Letters*, 1746, p. 5.

⁸ Orig. ed. iii, 305, 306, 311; ed. J. M. R., 1900, ii, 349, 353.

Tatler in 1709;¹ and Leslie so uses the term in his *Truth of Christianity Demonstrated* (1711). The anonymous essay, *Réflexions sur les grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant*, by Deslandes (? 1712), is translated in English (1713) as *Reflections on the Death of Free-thinkers*, and the translator uses the term in his prefatory Letter to the Author, beside using it in the text (pp. 52, 85) where the original (presumably) had *libertins*.

It was not till 1713, however, that Anthony Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking, occasion'd by the Rise and Growth of a Sect called Freethinkers*, gave the word a universal notoriety, and brought it into established currency in controversy, with the normal significance of "deist," Collins having entirely repudiated atheism. Even after this date, and indeed in full conformity with the definition in Collins's opening sentence, Ambrose Philips took *The Freethinker* as the title of a weekly journal (begun in 1718) on the lines of the *Spectator*, with no heterodox leaning,² the contributors including Boulter, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, and the son of Bishop Burnet. But despite this attempt to keep the word "freethinking" as a name for simple freedom from prejudice in secular affairs, the tendency to specialise it as aforesaid was irresistible. As names go, it was on the whole a good one; and the bitterness with which it was generally handled on the orthodox side showed that its implicit claim was felt to be disturbing, though some antagonists of course claimed from the first that they were as "free" under the law of right reason as any sceptic.³ At this time of day the word may be

¹ Nos. 12, 111, 135.

² Cp. Johnson on A. Philips in *Lives of the Poets*. Swift, too, issued his *Free Thoughts upon the Present State of Affairs* in 1714.

³ Thus Bentley, writing as *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis* against Collins, claims to have been "train'd up and exercis'd in *Free Thought* from my youth." Dr. Samuel Clarke somewhere makes a similar statement; and the point is raised by Berkeley in his *Minute Philosopher*, Dial. i, § 10. Shaftesbury on the other side protests that the passion of orthodoxy "holds up the intended chains and fetters and declares its resolution to enslave" (*Characteristics*, iii, 305; ed. 1900, ii, 345). Later, the claim of Bentley and Clarke became common; and one tract on Christian evidences, *A Layman's Faith*, 1732, whose author shows not a grain of the critical spirit, professes to be written "by a Freethinker and a Christian."

allowed prescriptive standing, as having no more drawbacks than most other names for schools of thought or attitudes of mind, and as having been admitted into most European languages. The question-begging element is not greater in this than in many other terms of similar intention, such as "rationalism"; and it incurs no such charge of absurdity as lies against the invidious religious term, "infidelity." The term "infidel" invites "fidel."

A plausible objection may indeed arise on the score that such a term as "freethought" should not be set up by thinkers who almost invariably reject the term "freewill"—the rationalistic succession having for two hundred and fifty years been carried on by determinists. But the issues raised by the two terms are on wholly different planes; and while in both cases the imperfection of the instrument of language is apparent, it is not in the present case a cause of psychological confusion, as it is in the discussion of the nature of will. The free-will fallacy consists in applying universally to the process of judgment and preference (which is a process of natural causation like another) a conception relevant only to *action*, as interfered with or unaffected by *extraneous* compulsion. To the processes of nature, organic or inorganic, the concepts "free" and "bond" are equally irrelevant: a tiger is no more "free" to crave for grass and recoil from flesh than is water to flow uphill; while, on the other hand, such "appetites" are not rationally to be described as forms of bondage. Only as a mode distinguishable from its contrary can "freedom" be predicated of any procedure, and it is so predicated of actions; whereas the whole category of volitions is alleged and denied by the verbal disputants to be "free."

The term "freewill," therefore, is irrational, as being wholly irrelevant to the conception of volition. But "freethought," on the other hand, points to an actual difference in *degree of employment of the faculty of criticism*. The proposition is that some men think

more "freely" than others in that they are (a) not terrorised by any veto on criticism, and (b) not hampered, or less hampered, by ignorant pre-suppositions. In both cases there is a real discrimination. There is no allegation that, absolutely speaking, "thought is free" in the sense of the orthodox formula; on the contrary, it is asserted that the rationalist's critical course is specifically determined by his intellectual structure and his preparation, and that it is sometimes different structure, but more often different preparation, that determines the anti-critical or counter-critical attitude of the believer. Change in the preparation, it is contended, will put the latter in fuller use of his potential resources; his inculcated fear of doubt and docility of assent being simply acquiescences in limitations of his *attention* to certain matters for reflection—that is to say, in limitations of his action. It is further implied that the instructed man, other things being equal, is "freer" to think than the uninstructed, as being less obstructed; but for the purpose of our history it is sufficient to posit the discriminations above noted.

For practical purposes, then, freethought may be defined as a conscious reaction against some phase or phases of conventional or traditional doctrine in religion—on the one hand, a claim to think freely in the sense not of disregard for logic, but of special loyalty to it on problems to which the past course of things has given a great intellectual and practical importance; on the other hand, the actual practice of such thinking. This sense, which is substantially agreed on, will on one or other side sufficiently cover those phenomena of early or rudimentary freethinking which wear the guise of simple concrete opposition to given doctrines or systems, whether by way of special demur or of the obtrusion of a new cult or doctrine. In either case, the claim to think in a measure freely is implicit in the criticism or the new affirmation: and such primary movements of the mind cannot well be separated, in

psychology or in history, from the fully conscious practice of criticism in the spirit of pure truth-seeking, or from the claim that such free examination is profoundly important to moral and intellectual health. Modern freethought, specially so-called, is only one of the developments of the slight primary capacity of man to doubt, to reason, to improve on past thinking, to assert his personality as against even sacrosanct and menacing authority. Concretely considered, it has proceeded by the support and stimulus of successive accretions of actual knowledge ; and the modern consciousness of its own abstract importance emerged by way of an impression or inference from certain social phenomena, as well as in terms of self-asserting instinct. There is no break in its evolution from primitive mental states any more than in the evolution of the natural sciences from primitive observation. What particularly accrues to the state of conscious and systematic discrimination, in the one case as in the other, is just the immense gain in security of possession.

§ 2. *Previous Histories.*

It is somewhat remarkable that this phenomenon has thus far had no general historic treatment save at the hands of ecclesiastical writers, who, in most cases, have regarded it solely as a form of more or less perverse hostility to their own creed. The modern scientific study of religions, which has yielded so many instructive surveys, almost of necessity excludes from view the specific phenomenon of freethought, which in the religion-making periods is to be traced rather by its religious results than by any record of its expression. All histories of philosophy, indeed, in some degree necessarily recognise it ; and such a work as Lange's *History of Materialism* may be regarded as part—whether or not sound in its historical treatment—of a complete history of freethought, dealing specially with general philosophic problems. But of freethought as a reasoned revision or rejection of current religious

doctrines by more or less practical people, we have no regular history by a professed freethinker, though there are many monographs and surveys of periods.

The useful compilation of Mr. Charles Watts, entitled *Freethought: Its Rise, Progress, and Triumph* (n. d.), deals with freethought in relation only to Christianity. Apart from treatises which broadly sketch the development of knowledge and of opinion, the nearest approaches to a general historic treatment are the *Dictionnaire des Athées* of Sylvain Maréchal (1800: 3e édit., par J. B. L. Germond, 1853) and the *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* by the late Joseph Mazzini Wheeler. The quaint work of Maréchal, expanded by his friend Lalande, exhibits much learning, but is made partly fantastic by its sardonic plan of including a number of religionists (including Job, John, and Jesus Christ!), some of whose utterances are held to lead logically to atheism. Mr. Wheeler's book is in every respect the more trustworthy.

In defence of Maréchal's method, it may be noted that the prevailing practice of Christian apologists had been to impute atheism to heterodox theistic thinkers of all ages at every opportunity. The *Historia universalis Atheismi et Atheorum falso et merito suspectorum* of J. F. Reimmann (Hildesiae, 1725) exhibits this habit both in its criticism and in its practice, as do the *Theses de Atheismo et Superstitione* of Buddeus (Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1716). These were the standard treatises of their kind for the eighteenth century, and seem to be the earliest systematic treatises in the nature of a history of freethought, excepting a *Historia Naturalismi* by A. Tribbechov (Jenæ, 1700) and a *Historia Atheismi breviter delineata* by Jenkinus Thomasius (Basileæ, 1709). In the same year with Reimmann's *Historia* appeared J. A. Fabricius' *Delectus Argumentorum et Syllabus scriptorum qui veritatem religionis Christianæ adversus Atheos, Epicureos, Deistas, seu Naturalistas.....asseruerunt* (Hamburgi), in which it is contended (cap. viii.) that many philosophers have been falsely described as atheists; but in the *Freydenker Lexicon* of J. A. Trinius (Leipzig, 1759), planned as a supplement to the work of Fabricius, are included such writers as Sir Thomas Browne and Dryden.

The works of the late Rev. John Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics*, *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, and *Skeptics of the French Renaissance*, which, though not constituting a literary whole, collectively cover a great deal of historical ground, must be expressly excepted from the above characterisation of clerical histories of freethought, in respect of their liberality of view. They deal largely, however, with general or philosophical

skepticism, which is a special development of freethought, often by way of reasonings in which many freethinkers do not acquiesce. (All strict skeptics, that is to say—as distinguished from religionists who profess skepticism up to a certain point by way of making a surrender to orthodox dogmatism¹—are freethinkers; but most freethinkers are not strictly skeptics.) The history of philosophic skepticism, again, is properly and methodically treated in the old work of Carl Friedrich Stäudlin, *Geschichte und Geist des Skepticismus* (2 Bde., Leipzig, 1794), the historic survey being divided into six periods: 1, Before Pyrrho; 2, from Pyrrho to Sextus; 3, from Sextus to Montaigne; 4, from Montaigne to La Mothe le Vayer; 5, from La Mothe le Vayer to Hume; 6, from Hume to Kant and Platner.

Stäudlin's later work, the *Geschichte des Rationalismus und Supernaturalismus* (1826), is a shorter but more general history of the strife between general freethought and supernaturalism in the Christian world and era. It deals cursorily with the intellectual attitude of the early Fathers, the early heretics, and the Scholastics; proceeding to a fuller survey of the developments since the Reformation, and covering Unitarianism, Latitudinarianism, English and French Deism, and German Rationalism of different shades down to the date of writing. Stäudlin may be described as a rationalising supernaturalist.

Like most works on religious and intellectual history written from a religious standpoint, those of Stäudlin treat the phenomena as it were *in vacuo*, with little regard to the conditioning circumstances, economic and political; thought being vaguely regarded as a force proceeding through its own proclivities. Needless to say, valuable work may be done up to a certain point on this method, which is seen in full play in Hegel; and high praise is due to the learned and thoughtful treatise of R. W. Mackay, *The Progress of the Intellect as Exemplified in the Religious Development of the Greeks and Hebrews* (2 vols. 1850), where it is partially but ably supplemented by the method of inductive science. That method, again, is freshly applied to a restricted problem in W. A. Schmidt's *Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert der Kaiserherrschaft und des Christenthums* (1847).

Later come the *Vorgeschichte des Rationalismus* (1853-62) and *Geschichte des Rationalismus* (1865) of the theologian Tholuck. Of these the latter is unfinished, coming down only to the middle of the eighteenth century; while the former does

¹ Cp. Hauréau, *Histoire de la philosophie scolastique*, ed. 1870-72, i, 543-6.

not exactly fulfil its title, being composed of a volume (2 Abth. 1853, '54) on *Das akademische Leben des 17ten Jahrhunderts*, and of one on *Das kirchliche Leben des 17ten Jahrhunderts* (2 Abth. 1861, '62), both being restricted to German developments. They thus give much matter extraneous to the subject, and are not exhaustive as to rationalism even in Germany. Hagenbach's *Die Kirchengeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts* (2 Th. 1848, '49), a series of lectures, translated in English, abridged, under the title *German Rationalism in its Rise, Progress, and Decline* (1865), conforms fairly to the latter title, save as regards the last clause.

Of much greater scholarly merit is the *Geschichte der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter, vom Ende des achten Jahrhunderts bis zum Anfange des vierzehnten*, by Hermann Reuter (1875, '77). This is at once learned, judicious, and impartial. Its definition of "*Aufklärung*" is substantially in agreement with the working definition of freethought given above.

Among other surveys of periods of innovating thought, as distinguished from histories of ecclesiastical heresy, or histories of "religious" or theological thought which only incidentally deal with heterodox opinion, should be noted the careful *Geschichte des englischen Deismus* of G. F. Lechler (1841); the slighter sketch of E. Sayous, *Les déistes anglais et le Christianisme* (1882); the somewhat diffuse work of Cesare Cantù, *Gli eretici d'Italia* (3 tom. 1865-67); the very intelligent study of Felice Tocco, *L'Eresia nel medio evo* (1884); Schmidt's *Histoire des Cathares* (2 tom. 1849); Chr. U. Hahn's learned *Geschichte der Ketzer im Mittelalter* (3 Bde. 1845-50); and the valuable research of M. F. T. Perrens, *Les Libertins en France au xviiie siècle* (1896). A similar scholarly research for the eighteenth century in France is still lacking, the many monographs on the more famous freethinkers leaving a good deal of literary history in obscurity. Such a research has been very painstakingly made for England in the late Sir Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (2 vols., 2nd ed. 1881), which, however, ignores scientific thought while treating somewhat fully a good deal of orthodox religious literature. The latest important monograph of the kind is *La Critique des traditions religieuses chez les Grecs, des origines au temps du Plutarque*, by Professor Paul Decharme (1904), a survey at once scholarly and attractive.

Contributions to the history of freethought, further, have been made in the works of J. W. Draper (*A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, 2 vols. 1861, many reprints; and *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, 1873, many reprints), both full of suggestion and stimulus, but

requiring thorough revision as to detail ; in the famous *Introduction to the History of Civilisation in England* of H. T. Buckle (2 vols. 1857-1861 ; new ed. in 1 vol. with annotations by the present writer, 1904) ; in the *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* of W. E. H. Lecky (2 vols. 1865), who was of Buckle's school, but fell below him in point of coherence ; in the comprehensive *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology* of Professor Andrew D. White (2 vols. 1896—a great expansion of his earlier essay, *The Warfare of Science*, 2nd ed. 1877) ; and in the very interesting essay of Mr. E. S. P. Baynes, *Religious Persecution : a Study in Political Psychology* (1904), as well as in many histories of philosophy and of sciences.

The so-called *History of Rationalism* of the American Bishop J. F. Hurst, first published in 1865, and "revised" in 1901, is in the main a work of *odium theologicum*, dealing chiefly with the evolution of theology and criticism in Germany since the Reformation. Even to that purpose it is very inadequate. Its preface alleges that "happily the vital body of evangelical truth has received only comparatively weak and timorous attacks from the more modern representatives of the rank and rabid rationalism which reached its climax near the close of the eighteenth, and has had a continuous decline through the nineteenth, century." It urges, however, as a reason for defensive activity, the consideration that "the work of Satan is never planless"; and further pronounces that the work of rationalism "must determine its character. This work has been most injurious to the faith and life of the Church, and its deeds must therefore be its condemnation" (Introd. p. 3). Thus the latest approximation to a history of theological rationalism by a clerical writer is the most negligible.

In English, apart from studies of given periods and of the progress of science and culture, the only other approaches to a history of freethought are those of Bishop Van Mildert, the Rev. J. E. Riddle, and Mr. Adam Storey Farrar. Van Mildert's *Historical View of the Rise and Progress of Infidelity*¹ constituted the Boyle Lectures for 1802-5 ; Mr. Riddle's *Natural History of Infidelity and Superstition in Contrast with Christian Faith* formed part of his Bampton Lectures for 1852 ; and Mr. Farrar produced his *Critical History of Freethought in reference to the Christian Religion* as

¹ Second ed. with enlarged Appendix (of authorities and references), 1808, 2 vols.

the Bampton Lectures for 1862. All three were men of considerable reading, and their works give useful bibliographical clues; but the virulence of Van Mildert deprives his treatise of rational weight; Mr. Riddle, who in any case professes to give merely a "Natural History" or abstract argument, and not a history proper, is only somewhat more constrainedly hostile to "infidelity"; and even Mr. Farrar, the most judicial as well as the most comprehensive of the three, proceeds on the old assumption that "unbelief" (from which he charitably distinguishes "doubt") generally arises from "antagonism of feeling, which wishes revelation untrue"—a thesis maintained with vehemence by the others.¹

Writers so placed, indeed, could not well be expected to contemplate freethought scientifically as an aspect of mental evolution common to all civilisations, any more than to look with sympathy on the freethought which is specifically anti-Christian. The annotations to all three works, certainly, show some consciousness of the need for another temper and method than that of their text,² which is too obviously, perhaps inevitably, composed for the satisfaction of the ordinary orthodox animus of their respective periods; but even the best remains not so much a history as an indictment. In the present sketch, framed though it be from the rationalistic standpoint, it is proposed to draw up not a counter indictment, but a more or less dispassionate account of the main historical phases of freethought, viewed on the one hand as expressions of the rational or critical spirit, playing on the subject-matter of religion, and on the other hand as sociological phenomena conditioned by social forces, in particular the economic and political. The lack of any previous general survey of a scientific character will, it is hoped, be taken into account in passing judgment on its schematic defects as well as its inevitable flaws of detail.

¹ Farrar, pref., p. x.; Riddle, p. 99; Van Mildert, i, 105, etc.

² Van Mildert even recast his first manuscript. See the *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, 1863, p. 35.

§ 3. *The Psychology of Freethinking.*

Though it is no part of our business here to elaborate the psychology of doubt and belief, it may be well to anticipate a possible criticism on the lines of recent psychological speculation, and to indicate at the outset the practical conception on which the present survey broadly proceeds. To begin with, the conception of freethinking implies that of hindrance, resistance, difficulty, and as regards objective obstacles the type of all hindrance is restraint upon freedom of speech. In other words, all such restraint is a check upon thinking. On reflection it soon becomes clear that where men dare not say or write what they think, the very power of thinking is at length impaired in the ablest, while the natural stimulus to new thought is withdrawn from the rest. No man can properly develop his mind without contact with other minds, suggestion and criticism being alike factors in every fruitful mental evolution; and though for some the atmosphere of personal intercourse is but slightly necessary to the process of mental construction, even for these the prospect of promulgation is probably essential to the undertaking of the task. In any case, it is certain that the exercise of argument is a condition of intellectual growth: not one man in a million will or can argue closely with himself on issues on which he knows he can say nothing and can never overtly act; and for the average man all reasoning on great problems is a matter of prompting from without. The simple fact that the conversation of uneducated people runs so largely to citation of what "he says" makes clear this dependence. Each brings something to the common store, and progress is set up by "pooling" the mass of small intellectual variations or originalities. Thus in the long run freedom of speech is the measure of a generation's intellectual capacity;¹

¹ Cp. W. A. Schmidt, *Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert der Kaiserherrschaft und des Christenthums*, 1847, pp. 12-13.

and the promoters of such freedom are typically the truest servants of progress.

On the other hand, there is still a common disposition to ascribe to a species of intellectual malice the disturbance that criticism causes to the holders of established beliefs. Recent writers have pressed far the theorem that "will" enters as an element into every mental act, thus giving a momentary appearance of support to the old formula that unbelief is the result of an arbitrary or sinister perversity of individual choice. Needless to say, however, the new theorem—which inverts without refuting Spinoza's denial of the entity of volition—applies equally to acts of belief; and it is a matter of the simplest concrete observation that, in so far as will or wilfulness in the ordinary sense operates in the sphere of religion, it is at least as obvious and as active on the side of belief¹ as on the other. A moment's reflection on the historic phenomena of orthodox resistance to criticism will satisfy any student that, whatever may have been the stimulus on the side of heresy, the antagonism it arouses is largely the index of primary passion—the spontaneous resentment of the believer whose habits are disturbed. His will normally decides his action, without any process of judicial deliberation.

It is another way of stating the same fact to point out the fallacy of the familiar assumption that freethinking represents a bias to "negation." In the nature of the case, the believer has to do at least as much negation as his opponents; and if again we scan history in this connection we shall see cause to conclude that the temperamental tendency to negation—which is a form of variation like another—is abundantly common on the side of religious conservatism. Nowhere is there more habitual opposition to new ideas as such. At best the believer, so-called, rejects a given proposition or

¹ Its legitimacy on that side is expressly contended for by Professor William James in his volume *The Will to Believe* (1897), the positions of which were criticised by the present writer in the *University Magazine*, April and June, 1897.

suggestion because it clashes with something he already believes. The new proposition, however, has often been reached by way not of preliminary negation of the belief in question, but of constructive explanation, undertaken to bring observed facts into theoretic harmony. Thus the innovator has only contingently put aside the old belief because *it* clashes with something he believes in a more vital way ; and he has done this with circumspection, whereas his opponent too often repels him without a second thought. The phenomena of the rise of the Copernican astronomy, modern geology, and modern biology, all bear out this generalisation.

Nor is the charge of negativeness any more generally valid against such freethinking as directly assails current doctrines. There may be, of course, negative-minded people on that side as on the other ; and such may fortuitously do something to promote freethought, or may damage it in their neighbourhood by their atmosphere. But everything goes to show that freethinking normally proceeds by way of intellectual construction—that is, by way of effort to harmonise one position with another ; to modify a special dogma to the general run of one's thinking. The attitude of pure skepticism on a wide scale is really very rare—much rarer than the philosophic effort. So far from freethinkers being given to “destroying without building up,” they are, as a rule, unable to destroy a dogma either for themselves or for others without setting a constructive belief in its place—a form of explanation, that is ; such being much more truly a process of construction than would be the imposition of a new scheme of dogma. In point of fact, they are often accused, and by the same critics, of an undue tendency to speculative construction ; and the early atheists of Greece and of the modern period did so err. But that is only a proof the more that their freethinking was not a matter of arbitrary volition or an undue negativeness.

The only explanation which ostensibly countervails

this is the old one above glanced at—that the unbeliever finds the given doctrine troublesome as a restraint, and so determines to reject it. It is to be feared that this view has survived Mr. A. S. Farrar. Yet it is very clear that no man need throw aside any faith, and least of all Christianity, on the ground of its hampering his conduct. To say nothing of the fact that in every age, under every religion, at every stage of culture from that of the savage to that of the supersubtle decadent or mystic, men have practised every kind of misconduct without abandoning their supernatural credences—there is the special fact that the whole Christian system rests on the doctrine of forgiveness of sins to the believer. The theory of “wilful” disbelief on the part of the reprobate is thus entirely unplausible. Such disbelief in the terms of the case would be uneasy, as involving an element of incertitude; and his fear of retribution could never be laid. On the other hand, he has but inwardly to avow himself a sinner and a believer, and he has the assurance that repentance at the last moment will outweigh all his sins.

It is not, of course, suggested that such is the normal or frequent course of believing Christians; but it has been so often enough to make the “libertine” theory of unbelief untenable. Indeed, the singular diversity between profession and practice among Christians has in all periods called out declarations by the more fervid believers that their average fellow-Christians are “practical atheists.” More judicial minds may be set asking instead how far men really “believe” who do not act on their opinions. As one high authority has put it, in the Middle Ages the normal opposition of theory and practice “was peculiarly abrupt. Men’s impulses were more violent, and their conduct more reckless, than is often witnessed in modern society; while the absence of a criticising and measuring spirit made them surrender their minds more unreservedly than they would do now to a complete and imposing theory.....Resistance to God’s Vicar might be, and indeed was admitted to be, a

deadly sin, but it was one which nobody hesitated to commit."¹ And so with other sins, the sinner having somewhere in the rear of his consciousness the reflection that his sins could be absolved.

And, apart from such half-purposive forms of licence among Christians, there have been countless cases of purposive licence. In all ages there have been antinomian Christians, whether of the sort that simply rest on the "seventy times seven" of the Gospel, or of the more articulately logical kind who dwell on the doctrine of faith *versus* works. For the rest, as the considerate theologian will readily see, insistence on the possibility of a sinister motive for the unbeliever brings up the equal possibility of a sinister motive on the part of the convert to Christianity, ancient or modern. At every turn, then, the charge of perversity of the will recoils on the advocate of belief; so that it would be the course of common prudence to abandon it, even were it not in itself, as a rule, so plainly an expression of irritated bias.

On the other hand, it need not be disputed that unbelief has been often enough associated with some species of libertinism to give a passing colour for the pretence of causal connection. The fact, however, leads us to a less superficial explanation, worth keeping in view here. Freethinking being taken to be normally a "variation" of intellectual type in the direction of a critical demand for consistency and credibility in beliefs, its social assertion will be a matter on the one side of force of character, and on the other hand of force of circumstances. The intellectual potentiality will be variously developed in different men and in different surroundings. If we ask ourselves how, in general, the critical tendency is to arise or to come into play, we are almost compelled to suppose a special stimulus as well as a special faculty. Critical doubt is made possible, broadly speaking, by the accumulation of ideas or habits of certain kinds which insensibly undo a previous state

¹ Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 8th ed., p. 135.

of homogeneity of thought: for instance, a community subsiding into peace and order from a state of warfare and plunder will at length find the ethic of its daily life at variance with the conserved ethic of its early religion of human sacrifice and special family or tribal sanctions; or a community which has accumulated a certain amount of accurate knowledge of astronomy will gradually find such knowledge irreconcilable with its primitive cosmology. A specially gifted individual will anticipate the general movement of thought; but even for him some standing-ground must be supposed; and for the majority the advance in moral practice or scientific knowledge is the condition of any effective freethinking.

Between top and bottom, however, there are all grades of vivacity, earnestness, and courage; and on the side of the normal resistance there are all varieties of political and economic circumstance. It follows, then, that the avowed freethinker may be so in virtue either of special courage or of antecedent circumstances which make the attitude on his part less courageous. And it may even be granted to the quietist that the courage is at times that of ill-balanced judgment or heady temperament; just as it may be conceded to the conservative that it is at times that which goes with or follows on disregard of wise ways of life. It is well that the full force of this position be realised at the outset. When we find, as we shall, some historic freethinkers displaying either extreme imprudence or personal indiscipline, we shall be prepared, in terms of this preliminary questioning, to realise anew that humanity has owed a great deal to some of its "unbalanced" types; and that, though discipline is nearly the last word of wisdom, indiscipline may at times be the morbid accompaniment or excess of a certain openness of view and spontaneity of action which are much more favourable to moral and intellectual advance than a cold prudence or a safe insusceptibility. As for the case of the man who, already at odds with his fellows in the matter of his conduct, may in some phases of society feel it the easier to brave them

in the matter of his avowed creed, we have already seen that even this does not convict him of intellectual dishonesty. And were such cases relatively as numerous as they are scarce—were the debauched deists even commoner than the vinous Steeles and Fieldings—the use of the fact as an argument would still be an oblique course on the side of a religion which claims to have found its first and readiest hearing among publicans and sinners. For the rest, the harm done in the world's history by unbalanced freethinkers is as dust in the balance against the immeasurable evil wrought on religious motives.

It may, finally, help a religious reader to a judicial view of the phenomenon of freethought if he is reminded that every step forward in the alleged historic evolution of his own creed would depend, in the case put, on the existence of persons capable of rejecting a current and prevailing code in favour of one either denounced as impious or marked off by circumstances as dangerous. The Israelites in Egypt, the prophets and their supporters, the Gospel Jesus and his adherents, all ostensibly stand in some degree for positions of "negation," of hardy innovation, of disregard to things and persons popularly venerated; wherefore Collins, in the *Discourse* above mentioned, smilingly claimed at least the prophets as great freethinkers. On that head it may suffice to say that some of the temperamental qualifications would probably be very much the same for those who of old brought about religious innovation in terms of supernatural beliefs, and for those who in later times innovate by way of minimising or repudiating such beliefs, though the intellectual qualifications might be different. Bruno and Dolet and Vanini and Voltaire, faulty men all four, could at least be more readily conceived as prophets in ancient Jewry, or reformers under Herod, than as Pharisees, or even Sadducees, under either regimen.

Be that as it may, however, the issues between freethought and creed are ultimately to be settled only in

respect of their argumentative bases, as appreciable by men in society at any given time. It is with the notion of making the process of judicial appreciation a little easier, by historically exhibiting the varying conditions under which it has been undertaken in the past, that these pages are written.

CHAPTER II.

PRIMITIVE FREETHINKING

§ 1.

To consider the normal aspects of primitive life, as we see them in savage communities and trace them in early literature, is to realise the enormous hindrance offered to critical thinking in the primary stages of culture by the mere force of habit. "The savage," says our leading anthropologist, "by no means goes through life with the intention of gathering more knowledge and framing better laws than his fathers. On the contrary, his tendency is to consider his ancestors as having handed down to him the perfection of wisdom, which it would be impiety to make the least alteration in. Hence among the lower races there is obstinate resistance to the most desirable reforms, and progress can only force its way with a slowness and difficulty which we of this century can hardly imagine."¹ Among the Bantu of South Africa, before the spread of European rule, "any person in advance of his fellows was specially liable to suspicion [of sorcery], so that progress of any kind towards what we should term higher civilisation was made exceedingly difficult by this belief."² The real or would-be sorcerer could thus secure the elimination of the honest inventor; fear of sorcery being potent only against the supposed irregular practitioner. The relative obstinacy of conservatism in periods and places of narrow knowledge is again illustrated in Lane's account of the modern Egyptians in the first half of the nineteenth century:

¹ E. B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, 1881, p. 439. Cp. Lang, *Custom and Myth*, ed. 1893, p. 72.

² Theal, *The Beginning of South African History*, 1902, p. 57.

"Some Egyptians who had studied for a few years in France declared to me that they could not instil any of the notions which they had there acquired even into the minds of their most intimate friends."¹ So in modern Japan there were many assassinations of reformers, and some civil war, before Western ideas could gain a footing.² The less the knowledge, in short, the harder to add to it.

It is hardly possible to estimate with any confidence the relative rates of progress; but, though all are extremely slow, it would seem that reason could sooner play correctively on errors of secular practice³ than on any species of proposition in religion—taking that word to connote at once mythology, early cosmology, and ritual ethic. Mere disbelief in a particular medicine-man or rain-maker who failed would not lead to any reflective disbelief in all; any more than the frequent beating or renunciation of his fetish by a savage or barbarian means rejection of his fetishism,⁴ or than the renunciation of a particular saint by a modern Catholic⁵ means abandonment of prayer to saints for intercession. In the long stage of lower savagery, then, the only approach to freethinking that would seriously affect general belief would presumably be that very credulity which gave foothold to religious beliefs to begin with. That is to say, without anything in the nature of general criticism of any story or doctrine, one such might to

¹ *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, 5th ed. 1871, i, 280, note.

² *Life of Mr. Yukichi Fukuzawa*, Tokyo, 1902, pp. 48-53, 56-69.

³ See Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed. i, 71, as to savage conservatism in handicraft; but compare his *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, 1865, p. 160, as to countervailing forces.

⁴ See the cases cited by Peschel, *The Races of Man*, Eng. tr. 1876, pp. 247-8, in particular that of Rastus, the last pagan Lapp in Europe, who quarrelled with his fetish stone for killing his reindeer in revenge for the withholding of its customary offering of brandy, and "immediately embraced Christianity." Compare the case of King Rum Bahadur of Nepaul, who cannonaded his Gods. Spencer, *Study of Sociology*, pp. 301-2. Also the anecdote cited by Spencer (*Id.* p. 160) from Sir R. Burton's *Goa*, p. 167. Here there is no disbelief, no reflection, but simple resentment.

⁵ *E.g.*, in the first chapter of Saint-Simon's *Mémoires*, the account of the French soldiers who at the siege of Namur burned and broke the images of Saint Médard for sending so much rain. Cp. Irvine, *Letters on Sicily*, 1813, p. 72.

some extent supersede another, in virtue of the relative gift of persuasion or personal weight of the propounders. Up to a certain point persons with a turn for myth or ritual-making would compete, and might even call in question each other's honesty, as well as each other's inspiration.

Since the rise of scientific hierology there has been a disposition among students to take for granted the good faith of all early religion-makers, and to dismiss entirely that assumption of fraud which was so long made by Christian writers concerning the greater part of every non-Christian system. When all systems are seen to be alike natural in origin, such charges are felt to recoil on the system which makes them; and latterly¹ Christian writers seeing as much have been fain to abandon the conception of "priestcraft," adroitly representing it as an extravagance of rationalism. It certainly served rationalistic purposes, and the title of the supposititious medieval work on "The Three Impostors" points to its currency among unbelievers long ago; but when we first find it popularly current in the seventeenth century it is in a Christian atmosphere.² Some of the early deists and others have probably in turn exaggerated the amount of deliberate deceit involved in the formation of religious systems; but nevertheless "priestcraft" is a demonstrable factor in the process. What is called the psychology of religion has been much obscured in response to the demand of religious persons to have it so presented as to flatter them in that capacity.³ Such

¹ Vico was one of the first, if not the first, to insist (following the saying of Petronius, *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor*) that "False religions were founded not by the imposture of some, but by the credulity of all" (*Scienza Nuova* [1725], lib. i, prop. 40). Yet when denying (*id.*, *De' Principii*, ed. 1852, p. 114) the assertions of travellers as to tribes without religion, he insisted that they were mere fictions planned to sell the authors' books—here imputing fraud as lightly as others had done in the case of the supposed founders of religions.

² *Eg.*, the Elizabethan play *Selimus* (Huth Lib. ed. of Greene, vol. xiv, ed. Grosart), dated 1594, vv. 258-262. (In "Temple Dramatists" ed., vv. 330-334.) See also below, vol. ii, ch. xiii.

³ On the principle of self-expression in religion, cp. Feuerbach, *Das Wesen der Religion*, in *Werke*, ed. 1846-49, i, 413, 445, 498, etc.

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a claim cannot be permitted to overrule the fair inductions of comparative science.

Anthropological evidence suggests that, while religion clearly begins in primordial fear and fancy, wilful fraud must to some extent have entered into all religious systems alike, even in the period of primeval credulity, were it only because the credulity was so great. One of the most judicial and sympathetic of the Christian scholars who have written the history of Greece treats as unquestionable the view that alike in pagan and Christian cults "priestcraft" has been "fertile in profitable devices, in the invention of legends, the fabrication of relics, and other modes of imposture";¹ and the leading hierologist of the last generation pronounces decisively as to an element of intentional deceit in the Koran-making of Mohammed²—a judgment which, if upheld, can hardly fail to be extended to some portions of all other sacred books. However that may be, we have positive evidence that wilful fraud enters at times into the doctrine of contemporary savages,³ and, if we can point to deliberate imposture alike in the charm-mongering of contemporary negroes and in the sacred-book-making of the higher historical systems, it seems reasonable to surmise that conscious deceit, as distinguished from childlike fabrication, would chronically enter into the tale-making of primitive men, as into their simpler relations with each other. It is indeed difficult to conceive how a copious mythology could ever arise without the play of a kind of imaginativeness that is hardly compatible with strict veracity; and it is pro-

¹ Bishop Thirlwall, *History of Greece*, ed. 1839, i, 186, 204. Cp. Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, 1858, i, 389.

² Tiele, *Outlines of the Hist. of Religions*, Eng. tr., p. 96. Cp. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2nd ed., p. 141, note.

³ See the article by E. J. Glave, of Stanley's force, on "Fetichism in Congoland," in the *Century Magazine*, April, 1891, p. 836. Compare F. Schultze, *Der Fetichismus*, 1871, pp. 137, 141, 142, 144, etc.; Theal, *The Beginning of South African History*, 1902, pp. 49, 52; Kranz, *Natur- und Kulturleben der Zulus*, 1880, pp. 110, 113-114; Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 35th thous., pp. 69, 81-4. Moffat notes that "A rain-maker seldom dies a natural death" (p. 85), most being executed as impostors for their failures.

bably only the exigencies of ecclesiastical life that cause modern critics still to treat the most deliberate fabrications and forgeries in the Hebrew sacred books as somehow produced in a spirit of the deepest concern for truth. An all-round concern for truth is, in fact, a late intellectual development, the product of much criticism and much doubt: hence, perhaps, the lenity of the verdicts under notice. Certain wild tribes here and there, living in a state of great simplicity, are in our own day described as remarkably truthful;¹ but they are not remarkable for range of supernatural belief; and their truthfulness is to be regarded as a product of their special stability and simplicity of life.

It belongs, further, to the very nature of the priestly function, in its earlier forms, to develop in a special degree the normal bias of the undisciplined mind to intellectual fraud. Granting that there are all degrees of self-consciousness in the process, we are bound to recognise that in all of us there is "the sophist within," who stands between us and candour in every problem either of self-criticism or of self-defence. And, if the instructed man recognises this clearly and the uninstructed does not, none the less is the latter an exemplification of the fact. His mental obliquities are not any less real because of his indifference to them than are the acts of the hereditary thief because he does them without shame. And if we consider how the fetish-priest is at every turn tempted to invent and prevaricate, simply because his pretensions are fundamentally preposterous; and how in turn the priest of a higher grade, even when he sincerely "believes" in his deity, is bound to put forward as matters of knowledge or revelation the hypotheses he frames to account for either the acts or the abstentions of the God, we shall see that the priestly office is really as incompatible with a high sincerity in the primitive stages as in those in which it is held by men who consciously propound falsities, whether for

¹ Tylor, *Anthropology*, p. 406; *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed. i, 38.

their mere gain or in the hope of doing good. It may be true that the priestly claim of supernatural sanction for an ethical command is at times motivated by an intense conviction of the rightness of the course of conduct prescribed; but none the less is such a habit of mind fatal to intellectual sincerity. Either there is sheer hallucination or there is pious fraud.

Given, however, the tendency to deceit among primitive folk, distrust and detection in a certain number of cases would presumably follow, constituting a measure of simple skepticism. By force partly of this and

of thought, early belief would be like that of contemporary ages like that of contemporary state of flux.* Comparative fixity with the approach to stability of political institutions, whether of political institutions, whether of priestly priestly priesthood. The usages of would seem to have been no less in tribal and public cults. For the moderns, definite organisation have been a great establishing phase of religious belief;³ and it that there was thus less intellectual long ages of what we regard as in those of savagery and them. On that view, systems present in the fullest degree the religion may have been in part habits of freedom accompanied skepticism. A modern inquirer advanced the theory that in ancient period of collection of the Rig- determined the monarchic character

6. *Religion*, 1889, p. 133; *Anthropological Religion, Ritual, and Religion*, 2nd. ed. ii, 358 sq. *Charge to the Clergy of Durham*, and *Religious Restoration in England*, 1854,

7. *Ahura Mazda, und die Asuras*, Halle,

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of the pre-Vedic religion, there was a decay of belief, which the final redaction served to accelerate. Such a theory can hardly pass beyond the stage of hypothesis in view of the entire absence of history proper in early Indian literature; but we seem at least to have the evidence of the Veda itself that while it was being collected there were deniers of the existence of its Gods.¹

The latter testimony alone may serve as ground for raising afresh an old question which recent anthropology has somewhat inexactly decided—that, namely, as to whether there are any savages without religious beliefs.

For old discussions on the subject see Cumberland, *Disquisitio de legibus naturæ*, 1672, introd. (rejecting negative view as resting on inadequate testimony); Locke, *Essay on the Human Understanding*, B. I, c. iii, § 9; c. iv, § 8 (accepting negative view); protests against it by Vico (*Scienza Nuova*, 1725, as cited above, p. 26); by Shaftesbury (*Letters to a Student*, 1716, rep. in *Letters*, 1746, pp. 32–33); by Rev. John Milne, *An Account of Mr. Lock's Religion* (anon.), 1700, pp. 5–8; and by Sir W. Anstruther, *Essays Moral and Divine*, Edinburgh, 1701, p. 24; and general view by Fabricius, *Delectus argumentorum et Syllabus scriptorum*, Hamburgi, 1725, c. viii. Cp. also Swift, *Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, § 2.

Büchner (*Force and Matter*, ch. on “The Idea of God”); Sir John Lubbock (*Prehistoric Times*, 5th ed., pp. 574–580; *Origin of Civilisation*, 5th ed., pp. 213–217); and Mr. Spencer (*Principles of Sociology*, iii, § 583) have collected modern travellers' testimonies as to the absence of religious ideas in certain tribes. Cp. also J. A. St. John's (Bohn) ed. of Locke, notes on passages above cited, and on B. IV, ch. x, § 6. As Sir John Lubbock points out, the word “religion” is by some loosely or narrowly used to signify only a higher theology as distinct from lower supernaturalist beliefs. The proved

¹ *Rig-Veda*, x, 121 (as translated by Muir, Müller, Dutt, and von Bradke); and x, 82 (Dutt's rendering). It is to be noted that the refrain “Who is the God whom we should worship?” is entirely different in Ludwig's rendering of x, 121. Cp. Max Müller, Hibbert Lectures, p. 302, and *Natural Religion*, pp. 227–229, citing *R. V.*, viii, 100, 3, etc., for an apparently undisputed case of skepticism. See again Langlois's version of vi, 7, iii, 3 (p. 459). He cannot diverge much more from the German and English translators than they do from each other.

erroneousness of many of the negative testimonies has been insisted on by Benjamin Constant (*De la Religion*, 1824, i, 3-4); Theodore Parker (*Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion*, 1842 and 1855, ed. 1877, p. 16); G. Roskoff (*Das Religionswesen der rohesten Naturvölker*, 1880, Abschn. I.); Dr. Tylor, (*Primitive Culture*, i, 417-425); and Dr. Max Müller (*Introd. to the Science of Religion*, ed. 1882, p. 42 sq.; Hibbert Lectures, p. 91, sq.; *Natural Religion*, 1889, pp. 81-89; *Anthropological Religion*, 1892, pp. 428-435) have pressed the point as to the proved falsity of many of the negative testimonies. Much of the confusion turns on the fact that savages who practise no *worship* have religious beliefs (cp. Max Müller, Hibbert Lectures, ed. 1878, p. 17, citing Monsignor Salvado; and Carl Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals*, 1889, p. 284). The dispute, as it now stands, mainly turns on the definition of religion (cp. Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, Eng. tr. 1891, pp. 16-18, where Lubbock's position is partly misunderstood). Dr. Tylor, while deciding that no tribes known to us are religionless, leaves open the question of their existence in the past.

The problem has been unduly narrowed to the question whether there are any whole tribes so developed. It is obviously pertinent to ask whether there may not be diversity of opinion within a given tribe. Such testimonies as those collected by Sir John Lubbock and others, as to the existence of religionless savages, are held to be disposed of by further proof that tribes of savages who had been set down as religionless on the evidence of some of themselves had in reality a number of religious beliefs. Travellers' questions had been falsely answered, either on the principle that non-initiates must not be told the mysteries, or from that sudden perception of the oddity of their beliefs which comes even to some civilised people when they try to state them to an unbelieving outsider. Undoubtedly the negative view had in a number of cases been hastily taken; but there remains the question, on all hands surprisingly ignored, whether some of the savages who disavowed all belief in things supernatural may not have been telling the simple truth about themselves, or even about their families and their comrades. A savage asked by a traveller, "Do you believe" so-and-so, might very well

give a true negative answer for himself;¹ and the traveller's resulting misconception would be due to his own arbitrary assumption that all members of any tribe must think alike.

Unless such witnesses as Moffat be unfaithful reporters as well as mistaken in their inferences, *some* of the natives with whom they dealt were all but devoid of the ordinary religious notions² which in the case of other natives have enabled the missionaries to plant their doctrines. Nor is there anything hard of belief in the idea that, just as special religious movements spread credence in certain periods, a lack of active teachers in certain tribes may for a time have let previously common beliefs pass almost out of knowledge. If it be true that the Black Death wrought a great decline in the ecclesiastical life of England in the fourteenth century,³ a long period of life-destroying conditions might eliminate from the life of a savage tribe all lore save that of primary self-preservation. Moffat incidentally notes the significant fact that rain-makers in his time were usually foreigners to the tribes in which they operated.⁴

But on the other hand a relative indifference to religion in a given tribe might result from the influence of one or more leading men who spontaneously doubted the religious doctrine offered to them, as many in Israel, on the face of the priestly records, disbelieved in the whole theocratic polity. In modern times preachers are constantly found charging "unbelief" on their own flocks, in respect not of any criticism of religious narrative or dogma, but of simple lack of ostensible faith in doctrines of prayer and Providence nominally

¹ On the other hand, there might be genuine defect of knowledge of the religion of others of the tribe. This is said to occur in thousands of cases in Christian countries: why not also among savages?

² *E.g.*, Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, end of ch. xvi and beginning of ch. xix.

³ See Dr. Gasquet, *The Great Pestilence*, 1893.

⁴ *Missionary Labours*, ch. xix: stereo. ed. pp. 81, 82. It is noteworthy that the women were the first to avow unbelief in an unsuccessful rain-maker (*Id.* p. 84).

accepted.¹ Among peasants who have never seen a freethinking book or heard a professed freethinker's arguments may be heard expressions of spontaneous unfaith in current doctrines of Providence.

This is but a type of variations possible in primitive societies. Despite the social potency of primitive custom, variation may be surmised to occur in the mental as in the physical life at all stages; and what normally happens in savagery and low civilisation appears to be a cancelment of the skeptical variation by the total circumstances—the strength of the general lead to supernaturalism, the plausibility of such beliefs to the average intelligence, and the impossibility of setting up skeptical institutions to oppose the others. In civilised ages skeptical movements are repeatedly seen to dwindle for simple lack of institutions; which, however, are spontaneously set up by and serve as sustainers of religious systems. On the simpler level of savagery, skeptical personalities would in the long run fail to affirm themselves as against the institutions of ordinary savage religion—the seasonal feasts, the ceremonies attending birth and death, the use of rituals, images, charms, sorcery, all tending to stimulate and conserve supernatural beliefs in general. Only the abnormally courageous would dare outspokenly to doubt or deny at all; and their daring would put them in special jeopardy.² The ancient maxim, *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor*, is verified by all modern study of primitive life. It is a recent traveller who gives the

¹ *E.g.*, an aged female relative of the writer, quite orthodox in all her habits and devout to the extent of calling the book of Esther "Godless" because the word "God" does not occur in it, yet at a pinch declared that she had "never heard of Providence putting a boll of meal inside anybody's door." Her daughter-in-law, also of quite religious habits, quoted the saying with a certain sense of its audacity, but endorsed it, as she had cause to do. Yet both regularly practised prayer and asserted divine beneficence.

² See B. Seeman, "Fiji and the Fijians," in Galton's *Vacation Tourists*, 1862, pp. 275-6, as to the terrorism resorted to by Fijian priests against unbelievers. "Punishment was sure to overtake the skeptic, let his station in life be what it might"—*i.e.*, supernatural punishment was threatened, and the priests were not likely to let it fail.

definition : "Fetishism is the result of the efforts of the savage intelligence seeking after a theory which will account for the apparent hostility of nature to man."¹ And this incalculable force of fear is constantly exploited by the religious bias from the earliest stages of sorcery.

The check to intellectual evolution would here be on all fours with some of the checks inferribly at work in early moral evolution, where the types with the higher ideals would seem often to be positively endangered by their peculiarity, and would thus be the less likely to multiply. And what happened as between man and man would further tend to happen at times as between communities. Given the possible case of a tribe so well placed as to be unusually little affected by fear of enemies and the natural forces, the influence of rationalistic chiefs or of respected tribesmen might set up for a time a considerable anti-religious variation, involving at least a minimising of religious doctrine and practices. Such a case is actually seen among the prosperous peoples of the Upper Congo, some of whom, like the poorer tribes known to Moffat, have no "medicine-men" of their own and very vague notions of deity.² But when such a tribe did chance to come into conflict with others more religious, it would be peculiarly obnoxious to them ; and, being in the terms of the case unwarlike, its chance of survival on the old lines would be small.

Such a possibility is suggested with some vividness by the familiar contrast between the modern communities of Fiji and Samoa, the former cruel, cannibalistic, and religious, the latter much less austere religious and much more humane. The ferocious Fijians "looked upon the Samoans with horror, because they had no religion, no belief in any such deities [as the Fijians'], nor any of the sanguinary rites which prevailed in other islands" (Spencer, *Study of Sociology*, pp. 293-294, following J. Williams, *Narrative of Missionary Enterprise in the South Sea Islands*, ed. 1837, pp. 540-1). The "no religion" is

¹ E. J. Glave, art. cited, p. 825. Cp. Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times*, pp. 582, 594.

² H. H. Johnston, *The River Congo*, ed. 1895, p. 289. Cp. Moffat, as cited above.

of course only relatively true. Mr. Lang has noticed the error of the phrase "the godless Samoans"; but, while suggesting that the facts are the other way, he admits that in their creed "the religious sentiment has already become more or less self-conscious, and has begun to reason on its own practices" (*Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, ii, 34; 2nd ed. ii, 58).

Taking the phenomena all along the line of evolution, we are led to the generalisation that the rationalistic tendency, early or late, like the religious tendency, is a variation which prospers at different times in different degrees relatively to the favourableness of the environment. This view will be set forth in some detail in the course of our history.

It is not, finally, a mere surmise that individual savages and semi-savages in our own time vary towards disbelief in the supernaturalism of their fellows. To say nothing of the rational skepticism exhibited by the Zulu converts of Bishop Colenso, which was the means of opening his eyes to the incredibility of the Pentateuch,¹ or of the rationalism of the African chief who debated with Sir Samuel Baker the possibility of a future state,² we have the express missionary record that the forcible suppression of idolatry and tabu and the priesthood by King Rihoriho in the island of Hawaii, in 1819, was accomplished not only "before the arrival of any missionary," but on purely common-sense grounds, and with no thought of furthering Christianity, though he had heard of the substitution of Christianity for the native religion by Pomare in Tahiti. Rihoriho simply desired to save his wives and other women from the cruel pressure of the tabu system, and to divert the priests' revenues to secular purposes; and he actually had some strong priestly support.³ Had not the missionary system soon followed, however, the old worship, which had been desperately defended in battle at the instigation of the conservative priests, would in all probability have grown up afresh, though perhaps with

¹ *The Pentateuch*, vol. i, pref. p. vii; introd. p. 9.

² Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, iii, § 583.

³ Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, 1831, iv, 30-31, 126-128.

modifications. The savage and semi-savage social conditions, taken as a whole, are fatally unpropitious to rationalism.

A parallel case to that of Rihoriho is that of King Finow of the Tonga Islands, described by Mariner, who was his intimate. "He used to say that the Gods would always favour that party in war in which there were the greatest chiefs and warriors"—the European *mot* strictly adapted to Fiji conditions. "He did not believe that the Gods paid much attention in *other* respects to the affairs of mankind; nor did he think that they could have any reason for doing so—no more than men could have any reason or interest in attending to the affairs of the Gods." For the rest, "it is certain that he disbelieved most of the oracles delivered by the priests," though he carefully used them for political and military purposes. And, though such "impiety" as his was very rare, his son after him decided to abolish the priestly office of "divine chieftain," on the score that it was seen to avail for nothing, while it cost a good deal; and the chiefs and common people were soon brought to acquiesce in the policy.¹

Such cases appear to occur in many barbarous communities. It is recorded of the Kaffir chief Go that he was perfectly aware of the hollowness of the pretensions of the magicians and rain-makers of his tribe, though he held it impolitic to break with them, and called them in and followed their prescriptions, as did his subjects.² Yet again, in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, we have the story of King Edwin's priest, Coifi, naïvely avowing

¹ *Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, compiled from the communications of W. Mariner, by John Martin, M.D., 3rd ed. 1827, i, 338-9; ii, 27-28, 83-86, 134. Mariner, who saw much of the priests, found no reason to suspect them of any systematic deception. See ii, 129.

² Dr. A. Kropf, *Das Volk der Xosa-Kaffern in östlichen Südafrika*, Berlin, 1899, pp. 203-4. Dr. Kropf, a missionary of forty years' experience, states that many of the Kaffirs latterly disbelieve in their sorcerers; but this may be partly a result of missionary teaching—not so much the religious as the scientific. See the testimony of the Rev. James Macdonald, *Light in Africa*, 1890, pp. 47-48.

that he saw no virtue in his religion,¹ inasmuch as many men received more royal favours than he, who had been most diligent in serving the Gods.² Such a declaration might very well have been arranged for by the Christian Bishop Paulinus, who was converting the king, and would naturally provide for Coifi; but on any view a process of skepticism had taken place in the barbarian's mind.³

Other illustrations come from the history of ancient Scandinavia. Grimm notes in several Norse sagas and songs expressions of contempt for various Gods, which appear to be independent of Christian influence;⁴ and there are other evidences. In the saga of King Olaf Tryggvason, who enforced Christianity on Norway, it is declared that he relied much more on his own arm than on Thor and Odin; while another announced that he was neither Christian nor Pagan, adding: "My companions and I have no other religion than the confidence of our own strength and in the good success which always attends us in war." Similar sentiments are recorded to have been uttered by Rolf Krake, a legendary king of Denmark (*circa* 500);⁵ and we have in the *Æneid* the classic type—doubtless drawn from barbaric life—of Mezentius, *divum contemptor*, who calls his right arm his God, and in dying declares that he appeals to no deity.⁶ Such utterances, of course, hardly amount to rational freethinking; but, where some could

¹ It is clear that in the Christianisation of Europe much use was made of the argument that the best lands had fallen to the Christian peoples. See the epistle of Bishop Daniel of Winchester to St. Boniface (*Ep.* lxvii.) cited in Schlegel's note to Mosheim, Reid's ed. of Murdock's translation, p. 262.

² Bede, *Eccles. Hist.*, ii, 13.

³ Cp. A. H. Mann in *Social England*, illustr. ed. i, 217.

⁴ *Teutonic Mythology*, Eng. trans. 1882, i, 7.

⁵ Crichton and Wheaton, *Scandinavia*, 1837, i, 198, *note*. Compare Dr. Ph. Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Skandinavischen Litteratur*, i, 25: "In the higher circles [in the pagan period] from an early date (*schon lange*) unbelief and even contempt of religion flourished.....probably never reaching the lower grades of the people." See also C. F. Allen, *Histoire de Danemark*, French trans., Copenhagen, 1878, i, 55.

⁶ *Æneid*, vii, 648; x, 773, 880. Mezentius does not deny that Gods exist: see x, 743.

be thus capable of anti-theism, it is reasonable to surmise that among the more reflective there were some capable of simple atheism or non-belief, and of the prudence of keeping the fact to themselves.

It is thus seen to be an *à priori* error to say, as has been said by an accomplished antagonist of apriorism, that "under the yoke of tribal custom skepticism can hardly arise: there is no place for the half-hearted: as all men feel alike, so all think alike: skepticism arises when beliefs are put into formal propositions."¹ Skepticism—in the sense in which the term is here used, that of rational disbelief—may even be commoner in some stages of the life of tribal custom than in some stages of backward civilisation loaded with formulated creeds. What is true is that in the primitive life the rationalism necessarily fails, for lack of culture and institutions, to diffuse and establish itself, whereas superstition succeeds, being naturally institution-making. Under such conditions skepticism is but a recurrent variation.

It is significant, further, that in the foregoing cases of unbelief at the lower levels of civilisation it is only the high rank of the doubter that secures publication for the fact of the doubt. In Hawaii, or Tonga, only a king's unbelief could make itself historically heard. So in the familiar story of the doubting Inca of Peru, who in public religious assembly is said to have avowed his conclusion that the deified Sun was not really a living thing, it is the status of the speaker that gives his words a record. The doubt had in all likelihood been long current among the wise men of Peru; it is indeed ascribed to two or three different Incas;² but save for the Incas' promulgation of it, history would bear no trace of Peruvian skepticism. So again in the Acolhuan State of Tezcucó, the most civilised in the New World

¹ Professor T. Clifford Allbutt, *Harveian Oration on Science and Medieval Thought*, 1901, p. 82.

² Garcilasso, l. viii, c. 8; l. ix, c. 10; Herrera, Dec. v, l. iv, c. 4. See the passages in Réville's *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 162–165.

before the Spanish conquest, the great King Netzahualcoyotl is found opposing the cults of human sacrifice and worshipping an "unknown God, the cause of causes," without an image and with only incense for offering.¹ Only the king in such an environment could put on record such a conception. There is, in fact, reason to believe that all ancient ameliorations of bloody rites were the work of humane kings or chiefs,² as they are known to have been among semi-savages in our own day.³ In bare justice we are bound to surmise that similar developments of rationalism have been fairly frequent in unwritten history, and that there must have been much of it among the common folk; though, on the other hand, the very position of a savage king, and the special energy of character which usually goes to secure it, may count for much in giving him the courage to think in defiance of custom. Apart from kings and chiefs, the priesthood itself would be the likeliest soil for skepticism, though, of course, not for the open avowal of it.

There are to be noted, finally, the facts lately collected as to marked skeptical variation among children;⁴ and the express evidence that "it has not been found in a single instance that an uneducated deaf-mute has had any conception of the existence of a Supreme Being as the Creator and Ruler of the Universe."⁵ These latter phenomena do not, of course, entitle us to accept Professor Gruppe's sweeping theorem that it is the religious variation that is abnormal, and that religion can have spread only by way of the hereditary imposition of the original insanity of one or two on the

¹ Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, Kirk's ed., pp. 81 sq., 91-3, 97; H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, v, 427-9; Clavigero, *History of Mexico*, Eng. tr. ed. 1807, B. iv, §§ 4, 15; vii, § 42.

² See the author's *Pagan Christs*, 1903, pp. 56, 394-5. Cp. Lafcadio Hearn, *Japan*, 1904, pp. 313-4.

³ Cp. T. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, ed. 1870, i, 231; Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years Ago*, 1884, p. 202.

⁴ See Professor Sully's *Studies of Childhood*, 1895.

⁵ Rev. S. Smith, *Church Work among the Deaf and Dumb*, 1875, cited by Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, iii, § 583. Cp. the testimony cited there from Dr. Kitto, *Lost Senses*, p. 200.

imagination of the many.¹ Deaf-mutes are not normal organisms. But all the facts together entitle us to decide that religion, broadly speaking, is but the variation that has chiefly flourished, by reason of its adaptation to the prevailing environment thus far; and to reject as unscientific the formulas which, even in the face of the rapidly-spreading rationalism of the more civilised nations, still affirm supernaturalist beliefs to be a universal necessity of the human mind.

On the same grounds, we must reject the claim—arbitrarily set up by one historian in the very act of showing how religion historically oppugns science—that all sacred books as such “are true because they have been developed in accordance with the laws governing the evolution of truth in human history; and because in poem, chronicle, code, legend, myth, apologue, or parable, they reflect this development of what is best in the onward march of humanity.”² In this proposition the opening words, “are true *because*,” are strictly meaningless. All literature whatever has been developed under the same general laws. But if it be meant that sacred books were specially likely to garner truth as such, the claim must be negated. In terms of the whole demonstration of the bias of theology against new truth in modern times, the irresistible presumption is that in earlier times also the theological and theocratic spirit was hostile to every process by which truth is normally attained. And if the thesis be limited to moral truth, it is still less credible. It is, in fact, inconceivable that literature so near the popular level as to suit whole priesthoods should be

¹ *Die griechischen Culte und Mythen*, 1887, pp. 263, 276, 277, etc. What is true as regards the thesis is that some of the central insanities of religion, such as the cult of human sacrifice, seem to have been propagated in all directions from an Asiatic centre. See the author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 146, 366, etc. Cp. the Rev. D. Macdonald's *Asiatic Origin of the Oceanic Languages*, Luzac & Co., 1894; the *Nubische Grammatik* of Lepsius, 1880; and Terrien de Lacouperie, *Western Origin of the Early Chinese Civilisation*, 1894, pp. 134, 362-3.

² Dr. Andrew White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, 1896, i, 23.

morally the best of which even the age producing it is capable; and nothing is more certain than that enlightened ethic has always had to impeach or explain away the barbarisms of some sacred books. The true summary is that in the majority of cases the accepted sacred books have of necessity missed alike scientific truth and purified ethic, inasmuch as they excluded the criticism of the freethinking few on the sacred books themselves. There is sociological as well as physical science, and the former is flouted when the whole freethinking of the human race in the period of Bible-making is either ignored or treated as worthless.

It is probable, for instance, that in all stages of primitive religion there have been disbelievers in the value of sacrifice, who might or might not dare to denounce the practice. The demurrers to it in the Hebrew prophetic literature are probably late; but they were in all likelihood anticipated in early times. Among the Fijians, for whom cannibalism was an essentially religious act, the privilege of the males of the aristocracy, there were a number of the latter who, before and apart from the entrance of Christianity, abominated and denounced the practice, reasoning against it also on utilitarian grounds, while the orthodox made it out to be a social duty. There were even whole towns which revolted against it and made it *tabu*; and it was by force mainly of this rationalistic reaction that the missionaries succeeded so readily in putting down the usage.¹ It is impossible to estimate how often in the past such a revolt of reason against religious insanity has been overborne by the forces of pious habit.

¹ Dr. B. Seeman, *Viti*, 1862, pp. 179-182.

CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS UNDER ANCIENT RELIGIONS

§ 1. *Early Association and Competition of Cults.*

WHEN religion has entered on the stage of quasi-civilised organisation, with fixed legends or documents, temples, and the rudiments of hierarchies, the increased forces of terrorism and conservatism are in nearly all cases seen to be in part countervailed by the simple interaction of the systems of different communities. There is no more ubiquitous force in the whole history of the subject, operating as it does in ancient Assyria, in the life of Vedic India and Confucian China, and in the diverse histories of progressive Greece and relatively stationary Egypt, down through the Christian Middle Ages to our own period of comparative studies.

In ages when any dispassionate comparative study was impossible, religious systems appear to have been considerably modified by the influence of those of conquered peoples on those of their conquerors, and *vice versâ*. Peoples who while at arm's length would insult and affect to despise each other's Gods, and would deride each other's myths,¹ appear frequently to have altered their attitude when one had conquered the other; and this not because of any special growth of sympathy, but by force of the old motive of fear. In the stage of natural polytheism no nation really doubted the existence of the Gods of another; at most, like the Hebrews

¹ Cp. Mr. Lang (*Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, i, 91) as to the contemptuous disbelief of savages in Christian myths. Mr. Lang observes that this shows savages and civilised men to have "different standards of credulity." That, however, does not seem to be the true inference. Each order of believer accepts the myths of his own creed and derides others.

of the early historic period, it would set its own God above the others, calling him "Lord of Lords." But, every community having its own God, he remained a local power when his own worshippers were conquered, and his cult and lore were respected accordingly. This procedure, which has been sometimes attributed to the Romans in particular as a stroke of political sagacity, was the normal and natural course of polytheism. Thus in the Hebrew books the Assyrian conqueror is represented as admitting that it is necessary to leave a priest who knows "the manner of the God of the land" among the new inhabitants he has planted there.

See 2 Kings xvii, 26. Cp. Ruth i, 16, and Judges xvii, 13. The account by Herodotus (ii, 171) of the preservation of the Pelasgic rites of Dêmêtêr by the women of Arcadia points to the same principle. See also hereinafter, ch. vi, § 1; K. O. Müller, *Introduction to a Scientific Study of Mythology*, Eng. trans. p. 193; Rhys, *Celtic Britain*, 2nd ed. p. 69; Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, p. 164; Gibbon, ch. xxxiv—Bohn ed. iii, 554, *note*; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, i, 113-115; and Mr. F. B. Jevons's *Introduction to the History of Religion*, 1896, pp. 36-40, where the fear felt by conquering races for the occult powers of the conquered is limited to the sphere of "magic." But when Mr. Jevons so defines magic as to admit of his proposition (p. 38) that "the *hostility from the beginning* between religion and magic is universally admitted," he throws into confusion the whole phenomena of the early official-religious practice of magic, of which sacrifice and prayer are the type-forms that have best survived. And in the end he upsets his definition by noting (p. 40) how magic, "*even where* its relation to religion is one of avowed hostility," will imitate religion. Obviously magic is a function or aspect or element of primitive religion (cp. Roskoff, *Das Religionswesen der rohesten Naturvölker*, 1880, p. 144; Sayce, pp. 315, 319, 327, and *passim*; and Tiele, *Egyptian Rel.*, pp. 22, 32); and any "hostility," far from being universal, is either a social or a philosophical differentiation. On the whole question compare the author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 9-36. In the opinion of Weber (*Ind. Lit.*, p. 264) the magic arts "found a more and more fruitful soil as the religious development of the Hindus progressed"; "so that they now, in fact, reign almost supreme." See again Mr. Jevons's own later admission, p. 395, where the exception of Christianity is somewhat arbitrary. On this compare Kant,

Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft, B. iv, Apotome ii, § 3.

Similar cases have been noted in primitive cults still surviving;¹ and to the general tendency may be conjecturally ascribed such phenomena as that of the Saturnalia, in which masters and slaves changed places, and the institution of the Levites among the Hebrews, otherwise only mythically explained. But if conquerors and conquered thus tended to amalgamate or associate their cults, equally would allied tribes tend to do so; and, when particular Gods of different groups were seen to correspond in respect of special attributes, a further analysis would be encouraged. Hence with every extension of every State, every advance in intercourse made in peace or through war, there would be a further comparison of credences, a further challenge to the reasoning powers of thoughtful men.

This tendency did not exclude, but would in certain cases conflict with, the strong primitive tendency to associate every God permanently with his supposed original locality. Tiele writes (*History of the Egyptian Religion*, Eng. trans. introd. p. xvii) that in no case was a place given to the Gods of one nation in another's pantheon "if they did not wholly alter their form, character, appearance, and not seldom their very name." This seems an over-statement, and is inconsistent with Tiele's own statement (*Histoire comparée des anciennes religions égyptiennes et sémitiques*, French trans., 1882, pp. 174-180) as to the adoption of Sumerian and Akkadian Gods and creeds by the Semites. What is clear is that local cults resisted the removal of their Gods' images; and the attempt to deport such images to Babylon, thus affecting the monopoly of the God of Babylon himself, was a main cause of the fall of Nabonidos, who was driven out by Cyrus. (E. Meyer, *Geschichte des*

¹ Cp. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, as last cited; Élie Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, pp. 254-6; Grant Allen, *Evolution of the Idea of God*, 1897, pp. 289, 301-2; Castrén, *Vorlesungen über die Finnische Mythologie*, 1853, p. 281; Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, 2e éd. p. 67; E. Higgins, *Hebrew Idolatry and Superstition*, 1893, pp. 20, 24; Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 1889, p. 77; Welhausen, *Heidenthum*, pp. 129, 183, cited by Smith, p. 79; Lang, *Making of Religion*, p. 65; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 2nd ed. ii, 72. Above all, see the record in *Old New Zealand*, "by a Pakeha Maori" (2nd ed. Auckland, 1863, p. 154) of the believing resort of some white men to native wizards in New Zealand.

Alterthums, i (1884), 599.) But the Assyrians invoked Bel Merodach of Babylon, after they had conquered Babylon, in terms of his own ritual; even as Israelites often invoked the Gods of Canaan (cp. Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, *On the Religion of the Ancient Babylonians*, p. 123). And King Mardouknadinakhe of Babylon, in the twelfth century B.C., carried off statues of the Assyrian Gods from the town of Hekali to Babylon, where they were kept captive for 418 years (Maspero, *Hist. ancienne des peuples de l'orient*, 4e éd. p. 300). A God could migrate with his worshippers from city to city (Meyer, iii, 169; Sayce, p. 124); and the Assyrian scribe class maintained the worship of their special God Nebo wherever they went, though he was a local God to start with (Sayce, pp. 117, 119, 121). And as to the recognition of the Gods of different Egyptian cities by politic kings, see Tiele's own statement, p. 36. Cp. his *Outlines*, pp. 73, 84, 207.

A concrete knowledge of the multiplicity of cults, then, was obtruded on the leisured and travelled men of the early empires and of such a civilisation as that of Hellas; and when to such knowledge there was added a scientific astronomy (the earliest to be constituted of the concrete sciences) a revision of beliefs by such men was inevitable.¹ It might take the form either of a guarded skepticism or of a monarchic theology, answering to the organisation of the actual earthly empire; and the latter view, in the nature of the case, would much the more easily gain ground. The freethought of early civilisation, then, would be practically limited for a long time to movements in the direction of coördinating polytheism, to the end of setting up a supreme though not a sole deity; the chief God in any given case being apt to be the God specially affected by the reigning monarch. Allocation of spheres of influence to the principal deities would be the working minimum of plausible adjustment,

¹ The same process will be recorded later in the case of the intercourse of Crusaders and Saracens; and in the seventeenth century it is noted by La Bruyère (*Caractères*, ch. xvi, *Des esprits forts*, par. 3) as occurring in his day. The anonymous English author of an essay on *The Agreement of the Customs of the East Indians with those of the Jews* (1705, pp. 152-3) naïvely endorses La Bruyère. Macaulay's remark to the Edinburgh electors, on the view taken of sectarian strifes by a man who in India had seen the worship of the cow, is well known.

since only in some such way could the established principle of the regularity of the heavens be formally accommodated to the current worship; and wherever there was monarchy, even if the monarch were polytheistic, there was a lead to gradation among the Gods.¹ A pantheistic conception would be the highest stretch of rationalism that could have any vogue even among the educated class. All the while every advance was liable to the ill-fortune of overthrow or arrest at the hands of an invading barbarism, which even in adopting the system of an established priesthood would be more likely to stiffen than to develop it. Early rationalism, in short, would share in the fluctuations of early civilisation; and achievements of thought would repeatedly be swept away, even as were the achievements of the constructive arts.

§ 2. *The Process in India.*

The process thus deducible from the main conditions is found actually happening in more than one of the ancient cultures, as their history is now sketched. In the Rig Veda, which if not the oldest is the least altered of the Eastern Sacred Books, the main line of change is obvious enough. It remains so far matter of conjecture to what extent the early Vedic cults contain matter adopted from non-Aryan Asiatic peoples; but no other hypothesis seems to account for the special development of the cult of Agni in India as compared with the content and development of the other early Aryan systems, in which, though there are developments of fire worship, the God Agni does not appear.² The specially priestly character of the Agni worship,

¹ Cp. Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 96, 121-122; Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 74; Tiele, *Egyptian Religion*, p. 36; and *Outlines*, p. 52.

² Cp. Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 109-110, and Fischer, *Heidenthum und Offenbarung*, p. 59. Professor Max Müller's insistence that the lines of Vedic religion could not have been "crossed by trains of thought which started from China, from Babylon, or from Egypt" (*Physical Religion*, p. 251) does not affect the hypothesis put above. The Professor admits (p. 250) the exact likeness of the Babylonian fire-cult to that of Agni.

and the precedence it takes in the Vedas over the solar cult of Mitra, which among the kindred Aryans of Eran receives in turn a special development, suggest some such grafting, though the relations between Aryans and the Hindu aborigines, as indicated in the Veda, seem to exclude the possibility of their adopting the fire-cult from the conquered inhabitants,¹ who, besides, are often spoken of in the Vedas as “non-sacrificers,”² and even “without Gods.”³ In any case the carrying on of the two main cults of Agni and Indra side by side points to an original and marked heterogeneity of racial elements; while the varying combination with them of the worship of other deities, the old Aryan Varuna, the three forms of the Sun-God Aditya, the Goddess Aditi and the eight Adityas, the solar Mitra, Vishnu, Rudra, and the Maruts, imply the adaptation of further varieties of hereditary creed. The outcome is a sufficiently chaotic medley, in which the attributes and status of the various Gods are reducible to no code,⁴ the same feats being assigned to several, and the attributes of all claimed for one. Here, then, were the conditions provocative of doubt among the critical; and while it is only in the later books of the Rig-Veda that such doubt finds priestly expression, it must be inferred that it was current in some degree among laymen before the hymn-makers avowed that they shared it. At first it is directed against the most popular God, Indra, perhaps on behalf of a rival cult.⁵ Later it seems to take the shape of a half-skeptical, half-mystical questioning as to which, if any, God is real.

From the Catholic standpoint, Dr. E. L. Fischer has argued that “Varuna is in the ontological, physical, and ethical

¹ But cp. Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, p. 164, as to possible later developments; and see above, pp. 43-45, as to the many cases in which conquering races have actually adopted the Gods of the conquered.

² Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, ii (2nd ed.), 372, 379, 384. ³ *Id.* p. 395.

⁴ Cp. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, 1894, pp. 94, 98-9; Ghosha, *History of Hindu Civilisation as illustrated in the Vedas*, Calcutta, 1889, pp. 190-1; Max Müller, *Physical Religion*, 1891, pp. 197-8.

⁵ Max Müller, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 302, citing R.V. viii, 100, 3; and ii, 12, 5.

relation the highest, indeed the unique, God of ancient India"; and that the Nature-Gods of the Veda can belong only to a later period in the religious consciousness (*Heidenthum und Offenbarung*, 1878, pp. 36-37). Such a development, had it really occurred, might be said to represent a movement of primitive freethought from an unsatisfying monotheism to a polytheism that seemed better to explain natural facts. A more plausible view of the process, however, is that of von Bradke, to the effect that "the old Indo-Germanic polytheism, with its pronounced monarchic apex, which.....constituted the religion of the pre-Vedic [Aryan] Hindus, lost its monarchic apex shortly before and during the Rig-Veda period, and set up for itself the so-called Henotheism [worship of deities severally as if each were the only one], which thus represented in India a time of religious decline; a decline that, at the end of the period to which the Rig-Veda hymns belong, led to an almost complete dissolution of the old beliefs. The earlier collection of the hymns must have promoted the decline; and the final redaction must have completed it. The collected hymns show only too plainly how the very deity before whom in one song all the remaining Gods bow themselves, in the next sinks almost in the dust before another. Then there sounds from the Rig-Veda (x, 121) the wistful question: Who is the God whom we should worship?" (*Dyâus Asura, Ahuramazda, und die Asuras*, Halle, 1885, p. 115; cp. note, *supra*, p. 30.) On this view the growth of monotheism went on alongside of a growth of critical unbelief, but, instead of expressing that, provoked it by way of reaction. M. Fontane (*Inde Védique*, 1881, p. 305) asserts on other grounds a popular movement of negation in the Vedic period, but offers rather slender evidence. There is better ground for his account of the system as one in which different cults had the upper hand at different times, the devotees of Indra rejecting Agni, and so on (pp. 310-311).

To meet such a doubt, a pantheistic view of things would naturally arise;¹ and for ancient as for more civilised peoples such a doctrine had the attraction of nominally reconciling the popular cult with the skepticism it had aroused. Rising thus as freethought, the

¹ Cp. *Rig-Veda*, i, 164, 46, x, 90 (cited by Ghosha, pp. 191, 198); viii, 10 (cited by Müller, *Natural Religion*, pp. 227-9); and x, 82, 121, 129 (cited by Romesh Chunder Dutt, *History of Civilisation in Ancient India*, ed. 1893, i, 95-97); Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 125; Weber, *History of Indian Literature*, Eng. trans., p. 5; Max Müller, *Hibbert Lectures*, ed. 1880, pp. 298-304, 310, 315; *Physical Religion*, p. 187; Barth, *Religions of India*, Eng. trans., p. 8; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii, 354.

pantheistic doctrine in itself became in India a dogmatic system, the monopoly of a priestly caste, whose training in mystical dialectic made them able to repel or baffle amateur criticism. Such fortifying of a sophisticated creed by institutions—of which the Brahmanic caste system is perhaps the strongest type—is one of the main conditions of relative permanence for any set of opinions; yet even within the Brahmanic system, by reason, presumably, of the principle that the higher truth was for the adept, and need not interfere with the popular cult, there were again successive critical revisions of the pantheistic idea.

Of the nature of a freethinking departure, among the early Brahmanists as in other societies, was the substitution of non-human for human sacrifices, a development of peaceful life-conditions which, though not primitive, must have ante-dated Buddhism. See Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 126–7 and refs.; and Müller, *Physical Religion*, p. 101. Professor Robertson Smith (*Religion of the Semites*, p. 346) appears to hold that animal sacrifice was never a substitute for human; but his ingenious argument, on analysis, is found to prove only that in certain cases the idea of such a substitution having taken place may have been unhistorical. If it be granted that human sacrifices ever occurred—and all the evidence goes to show that they were once universal—substitution would be an obvious way of abolishing them. Brahman thinkers went the further length of arguing against all blood sacrifices, but without practical success (Tiele, p. 126), until Buddhism triumphed (Mitchell, *Hinduism*, 1885, p. 106; Rhys Davids, tr. of *Dialogues of the Buddha*, 1899, p. 165).

In the earliest Upanishads the World-Being seems to have been figured as the totality of matter,¹ an atheistic view associated in particular with the teaching of

¹ Colebrooke's *Miscellaneous Essays*, ed. 1873, i, 375–6. Weber (*Ind. Lit.*, pp. 27, 137, 236, 284–5) has advanced the view that the adherents of this doctrine, who gradually became stigmatised as heretics, were the founders or beginners of Buddhism. But the view of the universe as a self-existent totality appears to enter into the Brahmans' Sankhya teaching, which is midway between the popular Nyaya system and the esoteric Vedânta (Ballantyne, *Christianity Contrasted with Hindu Philosophy*, 1859, pp. xviii, 59, 61). As to the connection between the Sankhya system and Buddhism, see Oldenberg, *Der Buddha, sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*, 3te Aufl., *Excurs*, p. 443.

Kapila,¹ who himself, however, was at length raised to divine status,² though his system continues to pass as substantially atheistic.³ This view being open to all manner of anti-religious criticism, which it incurred even within the Brahmanic pale,⁴ there was evolved an ideal formula in which the source of all things is "the invisible, intangible, unrelated, colourless one, who has neither eyes nor ears, neither hands nor feet, eternal, all-pervading, subtile, and undecaying."⁵ At the same time, the Upanishads exhibit a stringent reaction against the whole content of the Vedas. Their ostensible object is "to show the utter uselessness—nay, the mischievousness—of all ritual performances; to condemn every sacrificial act which has for its motive a desire or hope of reward; to deny, if not the existence, at least the exceptional and exalted character of the Devas; and to teach that there is no hope of salvation and deliverance except by the individual self recognising the true and universal self and finding rest there, where alone rest can be found."⁶

And the critical development does not end there. "In the old Upanishads, in which the hymns and sacrifices of the Veda are looked upon as useless, and as superseded by the higher knowledge taught by the forest-sages, they are not yet attacked as mere impositions. That opposition, however, sets in very decidedly in the Sutra period. In the *Nirukti* (i, 15), Yâska quotes the opinion of Kantsa, that the hymns of the Veda have no meaning at all."⁷ In short, every form of critical revolt against incredible doctrine that has arisen in later Europe had taken place in ancient India long

¹ H. H. Wilson, *Works*, 1862-71, ii, 346.

² Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, p. 236.

³ Ballantyne, pp. 58, 61; Major Jacob, *Manual of Hindu Pantheism*, 1881, p. 13.

⁴ Cp. Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, ed. 1880, i, 228-232, and Banerjea's *Dialogues on the Hindu Philosophy*, p. 73, cited by Major Jacob, *Manual of Hindu Pantheism*, p. 13.

⁵ Jacob, as cited, p. 3.

⁶ Max Müller, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 340-1.

⁷ *Id.* p. 139.

before the Alexandrian conquest.¹ And the same attitude continued to be common within the post-Alexandrian period; for Panini, who must apparently be dated then,² "was acquainted with infidels and nihilists";³ and the teaching of Brihaspati,⁴ on which was founded the system of the Kharvakas—apparently one of several sections of a freethinking school called the Lokâyatas⁵—is extremely destructive of Vedic pretensions. "The Veda is tainted by the three faults of untruth, self-contradiction, and tautology.....The impostors who call themselves Vedic pandits are mutually destructive.....The three authors of the Vedas were buffoons, knaves, and demons: All the well-known formulas of the pandits, and all the horrid rites for the queen commanded in the Asvamedha,—these were invented by buffoons, and so all the various kinds of presents to the priests; while the eating of flesh was similarly commanded by night-prowling demons."⁶

To what extent such aggressive rationalism ever spread, it is now quite impossible to ascertain. It seems probable that the word Lokâyata originally, or about 500 B.C., signified "Nature-lore," and that this passed as a branch of Brahman learning.⁷ Significantly enough, though the lore was not extensive, it came to be regarded as disposing men to unbelief, though it does not seem to have suggested any thorough training. At length, in the eighth century of our era, it is found applied as a term of abuse, in the sense of "infidel," by Kumârila in controversy with opponents as orthodox as himself; and about the same period Sankara connects with it a denial of the existence of a separate and immortal soul;⁸

¹ Cp. Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, p. 28.

² *Id.* pp. 28, 220–222.

³ Max Müller, Hibbert Lectures, p. 139, *note*, citing Panini, iv, 4, 60.

⁴ Apparently belonging to the later or middle Buddhist period. Müller, Hibbert Lectures, p. 141.

⁵ On these cp. Müller, p. 139, *note*, and Weber, *Ind. Lit.*, p. 246, *note*, with the very full research of Professor Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, 1899, pp. 166–172.

⁶ Müller, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 140–1.

⁷ Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p. 171.

⁸ *Id.* pp. 169–171.

though that opinion had been debated, and not called Lokâyata, long before, when the word was current in the broader sense.¹ Latterly, in the fourteenth century, on the strength of some doggrel verses which cannot have belonged to the early Brahmanic Lokâyata, it stands for extreme atheism and materialism not professed by any known school speaking for itself.² It is reasonable to conclude that, save insofar as the arguments of Brihaspati were common to the Kharvakas and the Buddhists,³ such doctrine as his or that of the later Lokâyatas cannot conceivably have been more than the revolt of a thoughtful minority against official as well as popular religion; and to speak of a time when “*the* Aryan settlers in India had arrived at the conviction that all their Devas or Gods were mere names”⁴ is to suggest a general evolution of rational thought which can no more have taken place in ancient India than it has done to-day in Europe. The old creeds would always have defenders; and every revolt was sure to incur a reaction.

The phenomenon of the schism represented by the two divisions of the Yazur Veda, the “White” and the “Black,” is plausibly accounted for as the outcome of the tendencies of a new and an old school, who selected from their Brahmanas, or treatises of ritual and theology, the portions which respectively suited them. The implied critical movement would tend to affect official thought in general. This schism is held by Weber to have arisen only in the period of ferment set up by Buddhism; but other disputes seem to have taken place in abundance in the Brahmanical schools before that time. (Cp. Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 123; Weber, *History of Indian Literature*, pp. 10, 27, 232; Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, 1892, pp. 36–37; and Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 34.) Again, the ascetic and penance-bearing hermits, who were encouraged by the veneration paid them to exalt themselves above all save the highest Gods, would by their utterances of necessity affect the course of doctrine. Compare the same tendency as seen in Buddhism and Jainism (Tiele, pp. 135, 140).

¹ Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p. 172.

² *Id. ib.*

³ See Müller, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 141–2, citing Burnouf.

⁴ Müller, Hibbert Lectures, p. 310.

But in the later form of the Vedânta, "the end of the Veda," a monistic and pantheistic teaching holds its ground in our own day, after all the ups and downs of Brahmanism, alongside of the aboriginal cults which Brahmanism adopted in its battle with Buddhism; alongside, too, of the worship of the Veda itself as an eternal and miraculous document. "The leading tenets [of the Vedânta] are known to some extent in every village."¹ Yet the Vedântists, again, treat the Upanishads in turn as a miraculous and inspired system,² and repeat in their case the process of the Vedas: so sure is the law of fixation in religious thought, while the habit of worship subsists.

The highest activity of rationalistic speculation within the Brahmanic fold is seen to have followed intelligibly on the most powerful reaction against the Brahmans' authority. This took place when their sphere had been extended from the region of the Punjab, of which alone the Rig-Veda shows knowledge, to the great kingdoms of Southern India, pointed to in the Sûtras,³ or short digests of ritual and law designed for general official use. In the new environment "there was a well-marked lay-feeling, a widespread antagonism to the priests, a real sense of humour, a strong fund of common sense. Above all there was the most complete and unquestioned freedom of thought and expression in religious matters that the world had yet witnessed."⁴

The most popular basis for rejection of a given system—belief in another—made ultimately possible there the rise of a practically atheistic system capable, wherever

¹ Major Jacob, as cited, *preface*.

² Max Müller, *Psychological Religion*, 1893, pp. 95, 97, 126; *Lectures on the Vedânta Philosophy*, 1894, p. 32.

³ Chunder Dutt, *History of Civilisation in Ancient India*, as cited, i, 112-3.

⁴ Rhys Davids, trans. of *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p. 166. Cp. his *Buddhism*, p. 143, as to Buddhist censures of an extravagant skepticism which denied every religious theory. In one of the Dialogues (ii, 25, p. 74) a contemporary sophist is cited as flatly denying a future state. Mr. Lillie, however (*Buddhism in Christendom*, 1887, p. 187), contends as against Professor Rhys Davids that the Upanishads were only "whispered to pupils who had gone through a severe probation."

embraced, of annulling the burdensome and exclusive system of the Brahmans, which had been obtruded in its worst form,¹ though not dominantly, in the new environment. Buddhism, though it cannot have arisen on one man's initiative in the manner claimed in the legends, even as stripped of their supernaturalist element,² was in its origin essentially a movement of freethought, such as could have arisen only in the atmosphere of a much mixed society³ where the extreme Brahmanical claims were on various grounds discredited, perhaps even within their own newly-adjusted body. It was stigmatised as "the science of reason," a term equivalent to "heresy" in the Christian sphere;⁴ and its definite rejection of the Vedas made it anti-sacerdotal even while it retained the modes of speech of polytheism. The tradition which makes the Buddha⁵ a prince suggests an upper-class origin for the reaction; and there are traces of a chronic resistance to the Brahmans' rule among their fellow-Aryans before the Buddhist period.

"The royal families, the warriors, who, it may be supposed, strenuously supported the priesthood so long as it was a question of robbing the people of their rights, now that this was effected turned against their former allies, and sought to throw off the yoke that was likewise laid upon them. These efforts were, however, unavailing: the colossus was too firmly established. Obscure legends and isolated allusions are the only records left to us in the later writings of the sacrilegious hands which ventured to attack the sacred and divinely consecrated majesty of the Brahmans; and these are careful to note at the same time the terrible punishments which befel those impious offenders" (Weber, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 19).

¹ Professor Weber (*Hist. Ind. Lit.*, p. 4) says the peoples of the Punjab never at all submitted to the Brahmanical rule and caste system. But the subject natives there must at the outset have been treated as an inferior order. Cp. Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 120 and refs.; and Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 23.

² Cp. Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, pp. 236, 284-5; Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, i, 228-232; and the general discussion of the problem in the author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 241-269.

³ Brahmanism had itself been by this time influenced by aboriginal elements, even to the extent of affecting its language. Weber, as cited, p. 177. Cp. Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, p. 164.

⁴ Major Jacob, as cited, p. 12.

⁵ *I.e.*, "the enlightened," a title given to sages in general. Weber, p. 284.

The circumstances, however, that the Buddhist writings were from the first in vernacular dialects, not in Sanskrit,¹ and that the mythical matter which accumulated round the story of the Buddha is in the main aboriginal, and largely common to the myth of Krishna,² go to prove that Buddhism spread specially in the non-Aryan sphere.³ Its practical (not theoretic)⁴ atheism seems to have rested fundamentally on the conception of Karma, the transition of the soul, or rather of the personality, through many stages up to that in which, by self-discipline, it attains the impersonal peace of Nirvana; and of this conception there is no trace in the Vedas,⁵ though it became a leading tenet of Brahmanism.

To the dissolvent influence of Greek culture may possibly be due some part of the success of Buddhism before our era, and even later. Hindu astronomy in the Vedic period was but slightly developed (Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, pp. 246, 249, 250); and "it was Greek influence that first infused a real life into Indian astronomy" (*Id.* p. 251; cp. Letronne, *Mélanges d'Érudition*, 1860 (?), p. 40; Narrien, *Histor. Account of the Origin and Progress of Astronomy*, p. 33, and Lib. Use. Kn. *History of Astronomy*, c. ii). This implies other interactions. It is presumably to Greek stimulus that we must trace the knowledge by Aryabhata (Colebrooke's *Essays*, ed. 1873, ii, 404; cp. Weber, p. 257) of the doctrine of the earth's diurnal revolution on its axis; and the fact that in India as in the Mediterranean world the truth was later lost from men's hands may be taken as one of the proofs that the two civilisations alike retrograded owing to evil political conditions. In the progressive period (from about 320 B.C. onwards for perhaps some centuries) Greek ideas might well help to discredit traditionalism; and their acceptance at royal courts would be favourable to toleration of the new teaching. At the same time, Buddhism must have been favoured by the native mental climate in which it arose.

The main differentiation of Buddhism from Brahmanism, again, is its ethical spirit, which sets aside formalism and seeks salvation in an inward reverie and

¹ Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, pp. 179, 299; Müller, *Natural Religion*, p. 299.

² See Senart, *Essai sur la légende de Buddha*, 2e édit., p. 297 ff.

³ Cp. Weber, pp. 286-7, 303.

⁴ See Weber, p. 301 and *note*, and p. 307; also Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 43, 83, etc.

⁵ Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 117.

discipline ; and this element in turn can hardly be conceived as arising save in an old society, far removed from the warlike stage represented by the Vedas. Whatever may have been its early association with Brahmanism¹ then, it must be regarded as essentially a reaction against Brahmanical doctrine and ideals ; a circumstance which would account for its early acceptance in the Punjab, where Brahmanism had never attained absolute power and was jealously resisted by the free population.² And the fact that Jainism, so closely akin to Buddhism, has its sacred books in a dialect belonging to the region in which Buddhism arose, further supports the view that the reaction grew out of the thought of a type of society differing widely from that in which Brahmanism arose. Jainism like Buddhism is substantially atheistic,³ and like it has an ancient monkish organisation to which women were early admitted. The original crypto-atheism or agnosticism of the Buddhist movement thus appears as a product of a relatively high, because complex, moral and intellectual evolution. It certainly never impugned the belief in the Gods ; on the contrary, the Buddha is often represented as speaking of their existence,⁴ and at times as approving of their customary worship ;⁵ but he is never said to counsel his own order to pray to them ; he makes light of sacrifice ; and above all he is made quite negative as to a future life, preaching the doctrine of Karma in a sense which excludes individual immortality.⁶ Thus it is permissible to say both that Buddhism recognises Gods and that it is practically atheistic.

¹ Cp. Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, pp. 27, 284-7 ; Max Müller, *Natural Religion*, p. 555 ; Jacobi, as there cited ; Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 135-6 ; Rhys Davids, *American Lectures on Buddhism*, pp. 115-116 ; *Buddhism*, p. 84 ; and the author's *Pagan Christs*, Part II, ch. ii, §§ 8-13.

² Weber, *Hist. Ind. Lit.*, pp. 4, 39.

³ Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 146.

⁴ Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 35, 79, 99.

⁵ Cp. *Pagan Christs*, pp. 248-250.

⁶ Rhys Davids, trans. of *Dialogues of the Buddha*, 1899, pp. 188-9 ; *American Lectures on Buddhism*, 1896, pp. 127-134 ; Hibbert Lectures, 1881, p. 109 ; *Buddhism*, pp. 95, 98-99.

“The fact cannot be disputed away that the religion of Buddha was from the beginning purely atheistic. The idea of the Godhead.....was for a time at least expelled from the sanctuary of the human mind,¹ and the highest morality that was ever taught before the rise of Christianity was taught by men with whom the Gods had become mere phantoms, without any altars, not even an altar to the unknown God” (Max Müller, *Introd. to the Science of Religion*, ed. 1882, p. 81).

“He [Buddha] ignores God in so complete a way that he does not even seek to deny him; he does not suppress him, but he does not speak of him either to explain the origin and anterior existence of man or to explain the present life, or to conjecture his future life and definitive deliverance. The Buddha knows God in no fashion whatever” (Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, *Le Bouddha et sa Religion*, 1866, p. v).

“Buddhism and Christianity are indeed the two opposite poles with regard to the most essential points of religion: Buddhism ignoring all feeling of dependence on a higher power, and therefore denying the very existence of a supreme deity” (Müller, as last cited, p. 171).

“Lastly, the Buddha declared that he had arrived at [his] conclusions, not by study of the Vedas, nor from the teachings of others, but by the light of reason and intuition alone” (Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 48). “The most ancient Buddhism despises dreams and visions” (*Id.*, p. 177). “Agnostic atheismis the characteristic of his [Buddha's] system of philosophy” (*Id.*, p. 207).

On the other hand, the gradual colouring of Buddhism with popular mythology, the reversion (if, indeed, this were not early) to adoration and worship of the Buddha himself, and the final collapse of the system in India before the pressure of Brahmanised Hinduism, all prove the potency of the sociological conditions of success and failure for creeds and criticisms. Buddhism took the monastic form for its institutions, thus incurring ultimate petrification alike morally and intellectually; and in any case the normal Indian social conditions of abundant population, cheap food, and general ignorance involved an overwhelming vitality for the popular cults. These the orthodox Brahmans naturally took under their protection as a means of

¹ As the context in Professor Müller's work shows, these phrases are inaccurate.

maintaining their hold over the multitude;¹ and though their own highest philosophy has been poetically grafted on that basis, as in the epic of the Mahâbhârata and in the Bhagavat Gîta,² the ordinary worship of the deities of these poems is perforce utterly unphilosophical, varying between a primitive sensualism and an emotionalism closely akin to that of popular forms of Christianity. Buddhism itself, where it still prevails, exhibits similar tendencies.

It is disputed whether the Brahman influence drove Buddhism out of India by physical force, or whether the latter decayed in virtue of maladaptation to its environment. Its vogue for some seven hundred years, from about 300 B.C. to about 400 A.C., seems to have been largely due to its protection and final acceptance as a State religion by the dynasty of Chandragupta (the Sandracottos of the Greek historians), whose grandson Asoka showed it special favour. His rock-inscribed edicts (for which see Max Müller, *Introd. to Science of Rel.*, pp. 5-6, 23; *Anthropological Religion*, pp. 40-43; Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 220-228; Wheeler's *History of India*, vol. iii, app. 1; Asiatic Society's *Journals*, vols. viii and xii; *Indian Antiquary*, 1877, vol. vi) show a general concern for natural ethics, and especially for tolerance; but his mention of "The Terrors of the Future" among the religious works he specially honours shows (if genuine) that normal superstition, if ever widely repudiated (which is doubtful), had interpenetrated the system. The king, too, called himself "the delight of the Gods," as did his contemporary the Buddhist king of Ceylon (Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 84). Under Asoka, however, Buddhism was powerful enough to react somewhat on the West, then in contact with India as a result of the Alexandrian conquest (cp. Mahaffy, *Greek World under Roman Sway*, ch. ii; Weber's lecture on Ancient India, Eng. tr., pp. 25-6; *Indische Skizzen*, p. 28 [cited in the present writer's *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 164-5]; and Weber's *History of Indian Literature*, p. 255 and p. 309, *note*); and the fact that after his time it entered on a long conflict with Brahmanism proves that it remained practically dangerous to that system. In the fifth and sixth centuries of our era Buddhism in India "rapidly declined"—a circumstance

¹ Cp. Weber, *Ind. Lit.*, p. 289, *note*; and Banerjea, *Dialogues on the Hindu Philosophy*, p. 520, cited by Major Jacob, pp. 29-30.

² See Muir, *Ancient Sanskrit Texts*, iv, 50 (cited by Jacob, pp. 30-31), as to the Brahman view of the licence ascribed to Krishna. And see iii, 32 (cited by Jacob, p. 14), as to a remarkable disparagement of Vedism in the Bhagavat Gîta.

hardly intelligible save as a result of violence. Tiele, after expressly asserting the "rapid decline" (*Outlines*, p. 139), in the next breath asserts that there are no satisfactory proofs of such violence, and that "on the contrary, Buddhism appears to have pined away *slowly*" (p. 140: contrast his *Egyptian Religion*, p. xxi). Rhys Davids, in his *Buddhism*, p. 246 (so also Max Müller, *Anthrop. Rel.*, p. 43), argues for a process of violent extinction; but in his later work, *Buddhist India*, he retracts this view, and decides for a gradual decline in the face of a Brahmanic revival. Internal decay certainly appears to have occurred. Already in Gautama's own life, according to the legends, there were doctrinal disputes within his party (Müller, *Anthrop. Rel.*, p. 38); and soon heresies and censures abounded (*Introd. to Sc. of Rel.*, p. 23), till schisms arose and no fewer than eighteen sects took shape (Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 213-218).

Thus early in our inquiry we may gather, from a fairly complete historical case, the primary laws of causation as regards alike the progress and the decadence of movements of rationalistic thought. The fundamental economic dilemma, seen already in the life of the savage, presses at all stages of civilisation. The credent multitude, save in the very lowest stages of savage destitution, always feeds and houses those who furnish it with its appropriate mental food; and so long as there remains the individual struggle for existence, there will always be teachers ready. If the higher minds in any priesthood, awaking to the character of their traditional teaching, withdraw from it, lower minds, howbeit "sincere," will always take their place. The innovating teacher, in turn, is only at the beginning of his troubles when he contrives, on whatever bases, to set up a new organised movement. The very process of organisation, on the one hand, sets up the call for special economic sustenance—a constant motive to compromise with popular ignorance—and, on the other hand, tends to establish merely a new traditionalism, devoid of the critical impulse in which it arose.¹ And without organisation the innovating thought cannot communicate

¹ See this brought out in a strikingly dramatic way in Mr. Dennis Hird's novel, *The Believing Bishop*.

itself, cannot hold its own against the huge social pressures of tradition.

In ancient society, in short, there could be no continuous progress in freethinking: at best, there could but be periods or lines of relative progress, the result of special conjunctures of social and political circumstance. So much will appear, further, from the varying instances of still more ancient civilisations, the evolution of which may be the better understood from our survey of that of India.

§ 3. *Mesopotamia.*

The nature of the remains we possess of the ancient Babylonian and Assyrian religions is not such as to yield a direct record of their development; but they suffice to show that there, as elsewhere, a measure of rationalistic evolution occurred. Were there no other ground for the inference, it might not unreasonably be drawn from the post-exilic monotheism of the Hebrews, who, drawing so much of their cosmology and temple ritual from Babylon, may be presumed to have been influenced by the higher Semitic civilisations in other ways also.¹ But there is concrete evidence. What appears to have happened in Babylonia and Assyria, whose religious systems were grafted on that of the more ancient Sumer-Akkadian civilisation, is a gradual subordination of the numerous local Gods (at least in the thought of the more philosophic, including some of the priests) to the conception of one all-pervading power. This process would be assisted by that of imperialism; and in the recently-recovered code of Hammurabi we actually find references to *Ilu* "God" (as in the European legal phrase, "the act of God") without any further God-name.² On the other hand, the unifying tendency

¹ Cp. Dr. A. Jeremias, *Monotheistische Strömungen innerhalb der Babylonischen Religion*, 1904, p. 44—a very candid research.

² *The Hammurabi Code and the Sinaitic Legislation*, by Chilperic Edwards, 1904, pp. 67, 68, 70 (§§ 240, 249, 266). The invocations of named Gods by Hammurabi at the close of the code, however, suggest that the force of the word was "a God." Cp. p. 76 with what follows;

would be resisted by the strength of the traditions of the Babylonian cities, all of which had ancient cults before the later empires were built up.¹ Yet, again, peoples who failed in war would be in some measure led to renounce their God as weak ; while those who clung to their faith would be led, as in Jewry, to recast its ethic. The result was a set of compromises in which the provincial and foreign deities were treated either genealogically or grouped in family or other relations with the chief God or Gods of the time being.² Certain cults, again, were either kept always at a higher ethical level than the popular one, or were treated by the more refined and more critical worshippers in an elevated spirit ;³ and this tendency seems to have led to conceptions of purified deities who underlay or transcended the popular types, the names of the latter being held to point to one who was misconceived under their grosser aspects.⁴ Astronomical knowledge, again, gave rise to cosmological theories which pointed to a ruling and creating God,⁵ who as such would have a specially ethical character. In some such way was reached a conception of a Creator-God as the unity represented by the fifty names of the Great Gods, who lost their personality when their names were liturgically given to him⁶—a conception which in some statements even had a pantheistic aspect⁷ among a “ group of priestly thinkers,” and in others took the form of an ideal theocracy.⁸

and see note on p. 93. On this question compare Jeremias, as cited, pp. 39, 43.

¹ Maspero, *Hist. ancienne des peuples de l'orient*, 4e éd., p. 139 ; Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 121, 213, 215 ; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, (1884), 161 (§ 133) ; iii (1901), 167 sq. (§ 103).

² Sayce, pp. 219, 344 ; Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, Eng. ed., p. 127.

³ Jastrow, *Religions of Babylonia and Assyria*, 1898, p. 318.

⁴ Jastrow, p. 187 ; Sayce, pp. 128, 267-8. Cp. Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, Eng. tr., i, 91 ; Menzies, *History of Religion*, 1895, p. 171 ; Gunkel, *Israel und Babylonien*, 1903, p. 30 ; Jeremias, as cited, pp. 5-6.

⁵ Meyer, iii, 168 ; Jastrow, p. 79 ; Sayce, p. 331 sq., 367 sq. ; Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, p. 112 ; Jeremias, pp. 7-23.

⁶ Sayce, p. 305. Cp. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 452.

⁷ Jastrow, p. 190, note, p. 319 ; Sayce, pp. 191-2, 367 ; Lenormant, pp. 112, 113, 119, 133 ; Jeremias, p. 26.

⁸ Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 78 ; Sayce, *Ancient Empires of the East*, pp. 152-153 ; Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, 2nd ed., iii, 13 ; Maspero, p. 139.

There is record that the Babylonian schools were divided into different sects,¹ and their science was likely to make some of these rationalistic.² Professor Sayce even goes so far as to say that in the later cosmogony, "under a thin disguise of theological nomenclature, the Babylonian theory of the universe has become a philosophical materialism."³

It might be taken for granted, further, that disbelief would be set up by such a primitive fraud as the alleged pretence of the priests of Bel Merodach that the God cohabited nightly with the concubine set apart for him (Herodotos, i, 181-2), as was similarly pretended by the priests of Amun at Thebes. Herodotos could not believe the story, which, indeed, is probably a late Greek fable; but there must have been some skeptics within the sphere of the cults of which such tales were told.

As regards freethinking in general, much would depend on the development of the Chaldæan astronomy. That science, growing out of primitive astrology (cp. Whewell, *History of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd ed. i, 108), would tend to discredit, among its experts, much of the prevailing religious thought; and they seem to have carried it so far as to frame a scientific theory of comets (Seneca, citing Apollonius Myndius, *Quaest. Nat.*, vii, 3; cp. Lib. Use. Kn. *History of Astronomy*, c. 3; E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, i, 186; and Weber, *Ind. Lit.*, p. 248). Such knowledge would greatly favour skepticism, as well as monotheism and pantheism. It was sought to be astrologically applied; but, as the horoscopes varied, this was again a source of unbelief (Meyer, p. 179). Medicine, again, made little progress (Herod. i, 197).

It can hardly be doubted, finally, that in Babylonia and Assyria there were idealists who, like the Hebrew prophets, repudiated alike image-worship and the religion of sacrifices. The latter repudiation occurs frequently in later Greece and Rome. There, as in Jerusalem, it could make itself heard in virtue of the restrictedness of the power of the priests, who in imperial Babylonia and Assyria, on the other hand, might be trusted to suppress or override any such propaganda, as we have seen was done in Brahmanical India.

Concerning image-worship, apart from the proved fact of pantheistic doctrine, and the parallels in Egypt and India, it is to be noted that Isaiah actually puts in the mouth of the

¹ Strabo, xvi, c. 1, § 6.

² Cp. Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, i, 110; iii, 12-13.

³ Hibbert Lectures, p. 385.

Assyrian king a tirade against the "kingdoms of the idols" or "false gods," including in these Jerusalem and Samaria (Isa. x, 10, 11). The passage is dramatic, but it points to the possibility that in Assyria just as in Israel a disbelief in idols could arise from reflection on the spectacle of their multitude.

The chequered political history of Babylon and Assyria, however, made impossible any long-continued development of critical and philosophical thought. Their amalgamations of creeds and races had in a measure favoured such development;¹ and it was probably the setting up of a single rule over large populations formerly at chronic war that reduced to a minimum, if it did not wholly abolish, human sacrifice in the later pre-Persian empires;² but the inevitably subject state of the mass of the people, and the chronic military upset of the government, were conditions fatally favourable to ordinary superstition. The new universalist conceptions, instead of dissolving the special cults in pantheism, led only to a fresh competition of cults on cosmopolitan lines, all making the same pretensions, and stressing their most artificial peculiarities as all-important. Thus when old tribal or local religions went proselytising in the enlarged imperial field, they made their most worthless stipulations—as Jewish circumcision and abstinence from pork, and the self-mutilation of the followers of Cybelê—the very grounds of salvation.³ Culture remained wholly in the hands of the priestly and official class.⁴ Accordingly we find the early religion of sorcery maintaining itself in the literature of the advanced empires.⁵ The attitude of the Semitic priests and scribes towards the old Akkadic as a sacred language was in itself, like the use of sacred books in general, long a check upon new thought;⁶ and though the Assyrian life

¹ Meyer, iii, § 103; Sayce, pp. 192, 345.

² Cp. Jastrow, p. 662; Sayce, p. 78; and Tiele, *Hist. Comparée*, p. 209. It seems probable that human sacrifice was latterly restricted to the case of criminals.

³ Cp. Meyer, iii, 173.

⁴ Meyer, i, 187, and *note*.

⁵ Jastrow, pp. 187, 256; Sayce, pp. 316, 320, 322, 327; Meyer, i, 183; Lenormant, p. 110; Jeremias, p. 5.

⁶ Sayce, pp. 326, 341; cp. Jastrow, p. 317.

seems to have set this check aside, by reason of the lack of a culture class in Assyria, the later Babylonian kingdom which rose on the fall of Assyria was too short-lived to profit much by the gain, being in turn overthrown in the second generation by Cyrus. It is significant that the conqueror was welcomed by the Babylonian priests as against their last king, the inquiring and innovating Nabonidos¹ (Nabu-nahid), who had aimed at a monarchic polytheism or quasi-monotheism. He is described as having turned away from Mardouk (Mero-dach), the great Babylonian God, who accordingly accepted Cyrus in his stead. It is thus clear that Cyrus, who restored the old state of things, was no strict monotheist of the later Persian type, but a schemer who relied everywhere on popular religious interests, and conciliated the polytheists and henotheists of Babylon as he did the Yahweh-worshipping Jews.² The Persian quasi-monotheism and anti-idolatry, however, already existed, and it is conceivable that they may have been intensified among the more cultured through the peculiar juxtaposition of cults set up by the Persian conquest.

Mr. Sayce's dictum (Hibbert Lectures, p. 314), that the later ethical element in the Akkado-Babylonian system is "necessarily" due to Semitic race elements, is seen to be fallacious in the light of his own subsequent admission (p. 353) as to the lateness of the development among the Semites. The difference between early Akkadian and later Babylonian was simply one of culture-stage. See Mr. Sayce's own remarks on p. 300; and compare E. Meyer (*Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 178, 182, 183), who entirely rejects the claim made for Semitic ethics. See again Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 78, and Mr. Sayce's own account (*Ancient Empires of the East*, p. 202) of the *Phœnician* religion as "impure and cruel." Other writers take the line of arguing that the Phœnicians were "not Semites," and that they differed in all things from the true Semites (cp. Dr. Marcus Dods, *Israel's Iron Age*, 1874, p. 10, and Farrar, as there cited). The explanation of such arbitrary judgments seems to be that the Semites are assumed to have had a primordial religious gift as compared with "Turanians"; and that the Hebrews in turn

¹ Meyer, i, 599; Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 85-91; *Ancient Empires of the East*, p. 245.

² Meyer, iii, § 57.

are assumed to have been so gifted above other Semites. We shall best guard against *à priori* injustice to the Semites themselves, in the conjunctures in which they really advanced civilisation, by entirely discarding the unscientific method of explaining the history of races in terms of hereditary character (see below, § 6, *end*).

§ 4. *Ancient Persia.*

The Mazdean system, or worship of Ahura Mazda (Ormazd), of which we find in Herodotos positive historical record as an anti-idolatrous and nominally monotheistic creed¹ in the fifth century B.C., is the first to which these aspects can be ascribed with certainty. As the Jews are found represented in the Book of Jeremiah² (assumed to have been written in the sixth century B.C.) worshipping numerous Gods with images; and as polytheistic and idolatrous practices are still described in the Book of Ezekiel³ (assumed to have been written during or after the Babylonian Captivity), it is inadmissible to accept the unauthenticated writings of ostensibly earlier prophets as proving even a propaganda of monotheism on their part, the so-called Mosaic law being known to be in large part of late invention and of Babylonian derivation.⁴ In any case, the mass of the people were clearly image-worshippers. The Persians, on the other hand, can be taken with certainty to have had in the sixth century an imageless worship (though images existed for other purposes), with a supreme God set above all others. The Magian or Mazdean creed, as we have seen, was not very devoutly held by Cyrus; but Dareios a generation later is found holding it with zeal; and it cannot have grown in a generation to the form it then bore. It must therefore be regarded as a development of the religion of some section of the "Iranian" race, centring as it does round some deities common to the Vedic Aryans.

The Mazdean system, as we first trace it in history, was

¹ Herod. i, 131.

² Jer. xi, 13, etc.

³ Ezek. cc. vi, viii.

⁴ Cp. the recent literature on the recovered Code of Hammurabi.

the religion of the Medes, a people joined with the Persians proper under Cyrus; and the Magi or priests were one of the seven tribes of the Medes,¹ as the Levites were one of the tribes of Israel. It may then be conjectured that the Magi were a people who previously conquered or were conquered by the Medes, who had then adopted their religion, as did the Persians after their conquest by or union with the Medes. Cyrus, a semi-Persian, may well have regarded the Medes with some racial distrust, and, while using them as the national priests, would naturally not be devout in his adherence at a time when the two peoples were still mutually jealous. When, later, after the assassination of his son Smerdis (Bardes, or Bardija) by the elder son, King Cambyses, and the death of the latter, the Median and Magian interest set up the "false Smerdis," Persian conspirators overthrew the pretender and crowned the Persian Dareios Hystaspis, marking their sense of hostility to the Median and Magian element by a general massacre of Magi.² Those Magi who survived would naturally cultivate the more their priestly influence, the political being thus for the time destroyed; though they seemed to have stirred up a Median insurrection in the next century against Dareios II.³ However that may be, Dareios I. became a zealous devotee of their creed,⁴ doubtless finding that a useful means of conciliating the Medes in general, who at the outset of his reign seem to have given him much trouble.⁵ The richest part of his dominions⁶ was East-Iran, which appears to have been the original home of the worship of Ahura-Mazda.⁷

Such is the view of the case derivable from Herodotos, who remains the main authority; but recent critics have raised some

¹ Herod. i, 101.

² *Id.* iii, 79.

³ Cp. Grote, *History of Greece*, Part ii, ch. 33 (ed. 1888, iii, 442), *note*.

⁴ E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 505 (§ 417), 542 (§ 451), 617 (§ 515); Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 164.

⁵ Herod. i, 130.

⁶ Cp. Herod. iii, 94, 98; Grote, vol. iii, p. 448.

⁷ Meyer, as cited, i, 505, 530 (§ 439); Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 163, 165.

difficulties. That the Magians were originally a non-Median tribe seems clear; Dr. Tiele (*Outlines*, pp. 163, 165) even decides that they were certainly non-Aryan. Compare Ed. Meyer (*Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 530, *note*, 531, §§ 439, 440), who holds that the Mazdean system was in its nature not national but abstract, and could therefore take in any race. Several modern writers, however (Canon Rawlinson, ed. of Herodotos, i, 426-431; *Five Great Monarchies*, ii, 345-355, iii, 402-4; Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, Eng. trans., pp. 197, 218-239; Sayce, *Ancient Empires of the East*, p. 248), represent the Magians as not only anti-Aryan (= anti-Persian), but opposed to the very worship of Ormazd which is specially associated with their name. It seems difficult to reconcile this view with the facts: at least it involves the assumption of two opposed sets of Magi. The main basis for the theory seems to be the allusion in the Behistun inscription of Dareios to some acts of temple-destruction by the usurping Magian Gomates, brother and controller of the pretender Smerdis. (See the inscription translated in *Records of the Past*, i, 111-115.) This Meyer sets aside as an unsettled problem, without inferring that the Magians were anti-Mazdean (cp. § 449 and § 511, *note*). As to the massacre, however, Meyer decides (i, 613) that Herodotos blundered, magnifying the killing of "the Magus" into a slaughter of "the Magi." But this is one of the few points at which Herodotos is corroborated by Ktesias (cp. Grote, iii, 440, *note*). A clue to a solution may perhaps be found in the facts that, while the priestly system remained opposed to all image-worship, Dareios made emblematic images of the Supreme God (Meyer, i, 213, 617) and of Mithra; and that Artaxerxes Mnemon later put an image of Mithra in the royal temple of Susa, besides erecting many images to Anaitis. (Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, 2nd ed., iii, 320-1, 360-1.) There may have been opposing tendencies; the conquest of Babylon being likely to have introduced new elements. The Persian art now arising shows the most marked Assyrian influences.

The religion thus imposed on the Persians seems to have been imageless by reason of the simple defect of art among its cultivators;¹ and to have been monotheistic only in the sense that its chief deity was supreme over all others, including even the great Evil Power, Ahriman (Angra Mainyu). Its God-group included Mithra, once the equal of Ahura-Mazda,² and later more prominent

¹ Meyer, i, 528 (§ 438).

² Darmesteter, *The Zendavesta* (in "Sacred Books of the East" series), vol. i, introd., p. lx (1st ed.).

than he,¹ as well as a Goddess, Anahita, apparently of Akkadian origin. Before the period of Cyrus, the eastern part of Persia seems to have been but little civilised;² and it was probably there that its original lack of images became an essential element in the doctrine of its priests. As we find it in history, and still more in its sacred book, the Zendavesta, which as we have it represents a late liturgical compilation,³ Mazdeism is thus a priest-made religion rather than the work of one Zarathustra or any one reformer; and its rejection of images, however originated, is to be counted to the credit of its priests, like the pantheism or nominal monotheism of the Mesopotamian, Brahmanic, and Egyptian religions. The original popular faith had clearly been a normal polytheism.⁴ For the rest, the Mazdean ethic has the usual priestly character as regards the virtue it assigns to sacrifice;⁵ but otherwise compares favourably with Brahmanism.

As to this cult being priest-made, see Meyer, i, 523, 540, 541. Tiele (*Outlines*, pp. 167, 178) assumes a special reformation such as is traditionally associated with Zarathustra, holding that either a remarkable man or a sect must have established the monotheistic idea. Meyer (i, 537) holds with M. Darmesteter that Zarathustra is a purely mythical personage, made out of a Storm-God. Dr. Menzies (*History of Religion*, p. 384) holds strongly by his historic actuality. The problem is analogous to those concerning Moses and Buddha; but though the historic case of Mohammed bars a confident decision in the negative, the balance of presumption is strongly against the traditional view. See the author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 295-7.

There is no reason to believe, however, that among the Persian peoples the higher view of things fared any better than elsewhere.⁶ The priesthood, however enlightened it may have been in its inner culture,

¹ Rawlinson, *Religions of the Anc. World*, p. 105; Meyer, §§ 417, 450-1.

² Meyer, i, 507 (§ 418).

³ Cp. Meyer, i, 506-8; Renan, as cited by him, p. 508; Darmesteter, as cited, cc. iv-ix, 2nd ed.; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 165.

⁴ Meyer, i, 520 (§ 428).

⁵ *Id.* i, 524 (§ 433); Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 178; Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 1877, pp. 7-18.

⁶ Meyer, i, § 450 (p. 541).

never slackened the practice of sacrifice and ceremonial; and the worship of subordinate spirits and the propitiation of demons figured as largely in their beliefs as in any other. In time the cult of the Saviour-God Mithra came to the front very much as did that of Jesus later; and in the one case as in the other, despite ethical elements, superstition was furthered. When, still later, the recognition of Ahriman was found to endanger the monotheistic principle, an attempt seems to have been made under the Sassanian dynasty, in our own era, to save it by positing a deity who was father of both Ahura-Mazda and Angra-mainyu;¹ but this last slight effort of freethinking speculation came to nothing. Social and political obstacles determined the fate of Magian as of other ancient rationalism.

According to Rawlinson, Zoroastrianism under the Parthian (Arsacide) empire was gradually converted into a complex system of idolatry, involving a worship of ancestors and dead kings (*Sixth Oriental Monarchy*, p. 399; *Seventh Monarchy*, pp. 8-9, 56). Gutschmid, however, following Justin (xli, 3, 5-6), pronounces the Parthians zealous followers of Zoroastrianism, dutifully obeying it in the treatment of their dead (*Geschichte Irans von Alexander bis zum Untergang der Arsakiden*, 1888, pp. 57-58)—a law not fully obeyed even by Dareios and his dynasty (Heeren, *Asiatic Nations*, Eng. tr. i, 127). Rawlinson, on the contrary, says the Parthians burned their dead—an abomination to Zoroastrians. Certainly the name of the Parthian King Mithradates implies acceptance of Mazdeism. At the same time, Rawlinson admits that in Persia itself, under the Parthian dynasty, Zoroastrianism remained pure (*Seventh Monarchy*, pp. 9-10), and that, even when ultimately it became mixed up with normal polytheism, the dualistic faith and the supremacy of Ormazd were maintained (*Five Monarchies*, 2nd ed. iii, 362-3; cp. Darmesteter, *Zendavesta*, i, lxvi, 2nd ed.).

§ 5. Egypt.

The relatively rich store of memorials left by the Egyptian religions yields us hardly any more direct light on the growth of religious rationalism than do

¹ Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 167. Cp. Lenormant (*Chaldean Magic*, p. 229), who attributes the heresy to immoral Median Magi; and Spiegel (*Avesta*, 1852, i, 271), who considers it a derivation from Babylon.

those of Mesopotamia, though it supplies much fuller proof that such a growth took place. All that is clear is that the comparison and competition of henotheistic cults there as elsewhere led to a measure of relative skepticism, which took doctrinal shape in a loose monism or pantheism. The alternate ascendancy of different dynasties, with different Gods, forced on the process, which included, as in Babylon, a priestly grouping of deities in families and triads.¹ It involved also an esoteric explanation of the God-myths as symbolical of natural processes, or else of mystical ideas.² There are even evidences of quasi-atheism in the shape of materialistic hymns on Lucretian lines.³ At the beginning of the New Kingdom (B.C. 1500) it had been fully established for all the priesthoods that the Sun-God was the one real God, and that it was he who was worshipped in all the others.⁴ He in turn was conceived as a pervading spiritual force, of anthropomorphic character and strong moral bias. This seems to have been by way of a purification of one pre-eminent compound deity, Amun-Ra, to begin with, whose model was followed in other cults.⁵ "Theocracies of this kind could not have been formed unconsciously. Men knew perfectly well that they were taking a great step in advance of their fathers."⁶ There had occurred, in short, among the educated and priestly class a considerable development, going on through many centuries, alike in philosophical and in ethical thought; the ethics of the Egyptian "Book of the Dead" being quite as altruistic as those of any portion of the much

¹ E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 83.

² *Id.*, p. 81 (§ 66); Tiele, *History of the Egyptian Religion*, Eng. trans., pp. 119, 154.

³ Le Page Renouf, *Hibbert Lectures*, 2nd ed., p. 240.

⁴ Meyer, *Geschichte des Alten Egyptens*, in Oncken's series, 1877, B. iii, Kap. 3, p. 249; *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 109; Tiele, *Egyptian Religion*, pp. 149, 151, 157; Maspero, *Hist. ancienne des peuples de l'orient*, 4^e ed., pp. 278-80; Le Page Renouf, *Hibbert Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 215-230.

⁵ Tiele, pp. 153, 155, 156.

⁶ *Id.*, p. 157.

later Christian Gospels.¹ Such a development could arise only in long periods of peace and law-abiding life. And yet all this was done "without ever sacrificing the least particle of the beliefs of the past."² The popular polytheism, resting on absolute ignorance, was indestructible; and the most philosophic priests seem never to have dreamt of unsettling it.

It is contended, as against the notion of an esoteric and an exoteric doctrine, that the scribes "did not, as is generally supposed, keep their new ideas carefully concealed, so as to leave to the multitude nothing but coarse superstitions. The contrary is evident from a number of inscriptions which can be read by anybody, and from books which anyone can buy."³ But the assumption that "anyone" could read or buy books in ancient Egypt is a serious misconception. Even in our own civilisation, where "anyone" can presumably buy freethought journals or works on anthropology and the history of religions, the mass of the people are so placed that only by chance does such knowledge reach them; and multitudes are so little cultured that they would pass it by with uncomprehending indifference were it put before them. In ancient Egypt, however, the great mass of the people could not even read; and no man thought of teaching them.

This fact alone goes far to harmonise the ancient Greek testimonies as to the existence of an esoteric teaching in Egypt with Tiele's contention to the contrary. See the *pros* and *cons* set forth and confusedly pronounced upon by Professor Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, Eng. trans. pp. 400-1. We know from Diodoros (i, 81), what we could deduce from our other knowledge of Egyptian conditions, that, apart from the priests and the official class, no one received any literary culture save in some degree the higher grades of artificers, who needed some little knowledge of letters for their

¹ Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, 1884; 1 Hälfte, pp. 90-1; Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, Eng. trans., i, 395-7; Tiele, pp. 226-230.

² Tiele, pp. 114, 118, 154. Cp. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 101-2 (§ 85).

³ Tiele, *Egyptian Religion*, p. 157. Cp. p. 217.

work in connection with monuments, sepulchres, mummy-cases, and so forth. Cp. Maspero, *Hist. anc. des peuples de l'orient*, p. 285. Even the images of the higher Gods were shown to the people only on festival-days (Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, i, 82).

The Egyptian civilisation was thus, through all its stages, obviously conditioned by its material basis, which in turn ultimately determined its polity, there being no higher contemporary civilisation to lead it otherwise. An abundant, cheap, and regular food supply maintained in perpetuity a dense and easily-exploited population, whose lot through thousands of years was toil, ignorance, political subjection, and a primitive mental life.¹ For such a population general ideas had no light and no comfort: for them was the simple human worship of the local natural Gods or the presiding Gods of the kingdom, alike confusedly conceived as great powers, figured often as some animal, which for the primeval mind signified indefinite capacity and unknown possibility of power and knowledge.² Myths and not theories, magic and not ethics, were their spiritual food, albeit their peaceful animal lives conformed sufficiently to their code. And the life-conditions of the mass determined the policy of priest and king. The enormous priestly revenue came from the people, and the king's power rested on both orders.

As to this revenue see Diodoros Siculus, i, 73. A third of the whole land of the kingdom was allotted to the priesthood. It is to be noted, however, that the priestly order included all the physicians, lawyers, clerks, schoolmasters, sculptors, painters, land measurers, drug sellers, conjurers, diviners, and undertakers. Sharpe, *Egyptian Mythology*, p. 26; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.*, i, § 68.

This was fully seen when King Chuenaten or Khounaton, = Amunhotep (or Amenophis) IV, moved by monotheistic fanaticism, departed so far from the customary royal policy as to put under the ban all deities save that he had chosen for himself, repudiating the God-name Amun in his own name, and taking that

¹ Cp. Maspero, as cited, pp. 274-6.

² Meyer, i, 72.

of his chosen God, Aten (the sun's disk), for whom he built a new capital city. Though the king enforced his will while he lived, his movement "bore no fruit whatever," his policy being speedily reversed, and his own monuments and capital city razed to the ground by orthodox successors.¹ In the same way the earlier attempt of the alien Hyksos to suppress the native polytheism and image-worship had come to nothing.²

As the centuries lapsed the course of popular religion was rather downward than upward, if it can be measured by the multiplication of superstitions.³ The priests, who held the allegorical key to mythology, seem to have been the main multipliers of magic and fable, mummary, ceremonial, and symbol; and they jealously guarded their specialty against lay competition.⁴ Esoteric and exoteric doctrine flourished in their degrees side by side,⁵ the instructed apparently often accepting or acting upon both; primitive rites all the while flourishing on the level of the lowest civilisations,⁶ though the higher ethical teaching even improves, as in India.

Conflicts, conquests, and changes of dynasties seem to have made little difference in the life of the common people.⁷ Religion was the thread by which any ruler

¹ Maspero, *Hist. anc. de l'orient*, 4e éd. pp. 209-212; Brugsch, *Hist. of Egypt under the Pharaohs*, Eng. trans. ed. 1891, ch. x; Meyer, *Geschichte des alten Aegyptens*, B. iii, Kap. 4, 5; *Gesch. des Alterthums*, i, 271-4; Tiele, pp. 161-5. The history of Chuenaten is established by the later Egyptology. Sharpe makes no mention of it, though the point had been discussed from 1839 onwards. Cp. Lepsius, *Letters from Egypt*, etc., Bohn. trans. 1853, p. 27; and Nott and Gliddon's *Types of Mankind*, 1854, p. 147, and *Indigenous Races of the Earth*, 1857, pp. 116-117, in both of which places will be found the king's portrait. See last reference for the theory that he had been emasculated. It is noteworthy that in this reign sculpture seems to have regained some individuality.

² Tiele, p. 144; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.*, i, 135.

³ "We do not find magic predominant [in the tales] until the Ptolemaic age. At that time the physical magic of the early times reappears in full force." W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt*, 1898, p. 29. Cp. Maspero, p. 286.

⁴ Tiele, pp. 180-182; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.*, i, 140-143.

⁵ Tiele, pp. 184-5, 196, 217.

⁶ Herodotos, ii, 48, 60-64, etc. Cp. Maspero, p. 286.

⁷ "The Osiride and Cosmic Gods rose in importance as time went on, while the Abstract Gods continually sank on the whole. This agrees to the general idea that the imported Gods have to yield their position gradually to the older and more deeply-rooted faiths." Petrie, as cited, p. 95.

could lead them; and after the brief destructive outbreak of Cambyses,¹ himself at first tolerant, the Persian conquerors allowed the old faiths to subsist, caring only, like their predecessors, to prevent strife between the cults which would not tolerate each other.² The Ptolemies are found adopting and using the native cults as the native kings had done ages before them;³ and in the learned Greek-speaking society created by their dynasty at Alexandria there can have been at least as little concrete belief as prevailed in the priesthood of the older civilisation. It developed a pantheistic philosophy which ultimately, in the hands of Plotinus, compares very well with that of the Upanishads and of later European systems. But this was a hot-house flower; and in the open world outside, where Roman rule had broken the power of the ancient priesthood, and Greek immigration had overlaid the native element, Christianity found an easy entrance, and in a declining society flourished at its lowest level.⁴ The ancient ferment, indeed, produced many stirrings of relative freethought in the form of Christian heresies to be noted hereafter; one of the most notable being that of Arius, who, like his antagonist Athanasius, was an Alexandrian. But the cast of mind which elaborated the dogma of the Trinity is as directly an outcome of Egyptian culture-history as that which sought to rationalise the dogma by making the popular deity a created person;⁵ and the long and manifold internecine struggles of the sects were the due duplication of the older strifes between the worshippers of the various sacred animals in the several cities.⁶ In the end the entire population was but so

¹ The familiar narrative of Herodotos is put in doubt by the monuments. Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 246. But cp. Meyer, i, 611 (§ 508).

² Tiele, p. 158.

³ See figures 209, 212, 221, 235, 242, 249, 250, in vol. i of Sharpe's *History of Egypt*, 7th ed.

⁴ Cp. Sharpe, ii, 287-295.

⁵ Compare the orthodox view of Bishop Westcott, *Essays in the History of Religious Thought in the West*, 1891, pp. 197-200.

⁶ These fights had not ceased even in the time of Julian (Sharpe, ii, 280). Cp. Juvenal, *Sat.* xv, 33 sq.

much clay to take the impress of the Arab conquerors, with their new fanatic monotheism standing for the minimum of rational thought.

For the rest, the higher forms of the ancient religion had been able to hold their own till they were absolutely suppressed, with the philosophic schools, by the Byzantine government, which at the same time marked the end of the ancient civilisation by destroying or scattering the vast collection of books in the Serapeion, annihilating at once the last pagan cult and the stored treasure of pagan culture. With that culture too, however, there had been associated to the last the boundless credulity which had so long kept it company. In the second century of our era, under the Antonines, we have Apuleius telling of Isis worshipped as "Nature, parent of things, mistress of all elements, the primordial birth of the ages, highest of divinities, queen of departed spirits, first of the heavenly ones, the single manifestation of all Gods and Goddesses," who rules all things in earth and heaven, and who stands for the sole deity worshipped throughout the world under many names;¹ the while her worshipper cherishes all manner of the wildest superstitions, which even the subtle philosophy of the Alexandrian Neo-Platonic school did not discard. All alike, with the machinery of exorcism, were passed on to the worship of the Christian Queen of Heaven, leaving out only the pantheism; and when that worship in turn was overthrown, the One God of Islam enrolled in his train the same host of ancient hallucinations.² The fatality of circumstance was supreme.

§ 6. *Phoenicia.*

Of the inner workings of thought in the Phoenician religion we know even less, directly, than can be gathered as to any other ancient system of similar

¹ *Metamorphoses*, B. xi.

² Cp. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, *passim*.

notoriety,¹ so completely did the Roman conquest of Carthage, and the Macedonian conquest of Tyre and Sidon, blot out the literary remains of their peoples. Yet there are some indirect clues of a remarkable sort.

It is hardly to be doubted, in the first place, that Punic speculation took the same main lines as the early thought of Egypt and Mesopotamia, whose cultures, mixing in Syria as early as the fifteenth century B.C., had laid the basis of the later Phoenician civilisation.² The simple fact that among the Syro-Phoenicians was elaborated the alphabet adopted by all the later civilisations of the West almost implies a special measure of intellectual progress. We can indeed trace the normal movement of syncretism in the cults, and the normal tendency to improve their ethics. The theory of an original pure monotheism³ is no more tenable here than anywhere else; we can see that the general designation of the chief God of any city, usually recognisable as a Sun-God, by a title rather than a name,⁴ though it pointed to a general worship of a pre-eminent power, in no sense excluded a belief in minor powers, ranking even as deities. It did not do so in the admittedly polytheistic period; and it cannot therefore be supposed to have done so previously.

The chief Phoenician Gods, it is admitted, were everywhere called by one or several of the titles Baal (Lord), Ram or Rimmon (High), Melech or Molech (King), Melkarth (King of the City), Eliun (Supreme), Adonai (Lord), Bel-Samin (Lord of Heaven), etc. (Cp. Rawlinson, *History of Phoenicia*, p. 321; Tiele, *Histoire comparée des anciennes religions de l'Égypte*, etc., French trans., 1882, ch. iii, pp. 281-287; *Outlines*, p. 82; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.*, i, 246, and art. "PHOENICIA" in *Encyc. Biblica*, iii, 3742-5; Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 200.) The just inference is that the Sun-God was generally worshipped, the sun being for the Semitic peoples the pre-eminent Nature-power. "He alone of all the Gods is by Philo explained not as a deified man, but as the sun, who had been invoked from the

¹ Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.*, i, 232-3.

² Meyer, i, 237.

³ Put by Canon Rawlinson, *History of Phoenicia*, 1889, p. 321.

⁴ As to the universality of this tendency, see Meyer, ii, 97.

earliest times" (Meyer, last cit.). (All Gods were not Baals: the division between them and lesser powers corresponded somewhat, as Tiele notes, to that between Theoi and Daimones with the Greeks, and Ases and Vanes with the old Scandinavians. So in Babylonia and India the Bels and Asuras were marked off from lesser deities.) The fact that the Western Semites thus carried with them the worship of their chief deities in all their colonies would seem to make an end of the assumption (Gomme, *Ethnology of Folklore*, p. 68; Menzies, *History of Religion*, pp. 284, 250) that there is something specially "Aryan" in the "conception of Gods who could and did accompany the tribes wheresoever they travelled." Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.*, iii, 169.

The worship of the Baal, however, being that of a special Nature-power, cannot in early any more than in later times have been monotheistic. What happened was a preponderance of the double cult of the God and Goddess, Baal and Ashtoreth, as in the unquestionably polytheistic period (Rawlinson, p. 323; Tiele, *Hist. Comp.*, as cited, p. 319).

Apart from this normal tendency to identify Gods called by the same title (a state of things which, however, in ancient as in modern Catholic countries, tended at the same time to set up special adoration of a given image), there is seen in the later religion of Phoenicia a spirit of syncretism which operated in a manner the reverse of that seen in later Jewry. In the latter case the national God was ultimately conceived, however fanatically, as universal, all others being negated: in commercial Phoenicia, many foreign Gods were adopted,¹ the tendency being finally to conceive them as all manifestations of one Power.² And there is reason to suppose that in the cosmopolitan world of the Phoenician cities the higher intelligence reached a yet more subversive, though still fallacious, theory of religion. The pretended ancient Phoenician cosmogony of Sanchoniathon, preserved by Eusebius,³ while worthless as a record of the most ancient beliefs,⁴ may be taken as representing views current not

¹ Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 251, § 209; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 84; *Histoire comparée des anciennes religions*; Fr. trans., pp. 320-1.

² Rawlinson, *Hist. of Phoenicia*, p. 340; Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 204; Menzies, *Hist. of Religion*, p. 168.

³ *Præparatio Evangelica*, B. i, c. 9-10.

⁴ Meyer, i, 249.

only in the time and society of Philo of Byblos (C.E. 100), who had pretended to translate it, but in a period considerably earlier. This cosmogony is, as Eusebius complains, deliberately atheistic; and it further systematically explains away all God stories as being originally true of remarkable men.

Where this primitive form of atheistic rationalism originated we cannot now tell. But it was in some form current before the time of the Greek Evêmeros, who systematically developed it about 300 B.C.; for in a monotheistic application it more or less clearly underlies the redaction of much of the Hebrew Bible, where both patriarchal and regal names of the early period are found to be old God-names; and where the Sun-God Samson is made a "judge"¹—having originally been the Judge-God. In the Byblian writer, however, the purpose is not monotheistic, but atheistic; and the problem is whether this or that was the earlier development of the method. The natural presumption seems to be that the Hebrew adaptors of the old mythology used an already applied method, as the Christian Fathers later used the work of Evêmeros; and the citation from Thallos by Lactantius² suggests that the method had been applied in Chaldea, as it was spontaneously applied by the Greek epic poets who made memorable mortals out of the ancient deities Odysseus and Aeneas,³ Helen, Castor and Pollux, Achilles, and many more. It is in any case credible enough that among the much-travelling Phoenicians, with their open pantheon, an atheistic Evêmerism was thought out by the skeptical types before Evêmeros; and that the latter really drew his principles from Phoenicia.⁴ At any rate, they were there received, doubtless by a select few, as a means of answering the customary demand for "something in place of" the rejected Gods. Concerning the tradition

¹ Cp. Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, p. 159, as to Persian methods of the same kind.

² *Div. Inst.*, i, 23.

³ E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 104, 105.

⁴ So Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 204.

that an ancient Phoenician, Moschus, had sketched an atomic theory, we may again say that, though there is no valid evidence for the statement, it counts for something as proof that the Phoenicians had an old repute for rationalism.

The Byblian cosmogony may be conceived as an atheistic refinement on those of Babylon, adopted by the Jews. It connects with the curious theogony of Hesiod (which has Asiatic aspects), in that both begin with Chaos, and the Gods of Hesiod are born later. But whereas in Hesiod Chaos brings forth Erebus and Night (Eros being causal force), and Night bears Æther and Day to Erebus, while Earth virginally brings forth Heaven (Uranos) and the Sea, and then bears the first Gods in union with Heaven, the Phoenician fragment proceeds from black chaos and wind, after long ages, through Eros or Desire, to a kind of primeval slime, from which arise first animals without intelligence, who in turn produce some with intelligence. The effort to expel Deity must have been considerable, for sun and moon and stars seem to arise uncreated, and the sun's action spontaneously produces further developments. The first man and his wife are created by male and female principles of wind, and their offspring proceed to worship the Sun, calling him Beel Samin. The other Gods are explained as eminent mortals deified after their death. See the details in Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, Hodges' ed., pp. 1-22. As to Moschus, cp. Renouvier, *Manuel de philos. ancienne*, 1844, i, 238; and Mosheim's ed. of Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, Harrison's trans., i, 20; also Cudworth's *Eternal and Immuttable Morality*, same ed. iii, 548. On the general question of the Phoenician rationalism, compare Pausanias' account (vii, 23) of his discussion with a Sidonian, who explained that Apollo was simply the sun, and his son Æsculapius simply the healing art.

At the same time there are signs even in Phoenician worship of an effort after an ethical as well as an intellectual purification of the common religion. To call "the" Phoenician religion "impure and cruel"¹ is to obscure the fact that in all civilisations certain types and cults vary from the norm. In Phoenicia as in Israel there were humane anti-sensualists who either avoided or impugned the sensual and the cruel cults around

¹ Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 202.

them ; as well as ascetics who stood by human sacrifice while resisting sexual licence. That the better types remained the minority is to be understood in terms of the balance of the social and cultural forces of their civilisation, not of any racial bias or defect, intellectual or moral.

The remark of Meyer (*Gesch. des Alt.* i, 211, § 175), that an ethical or mystical conception of the God was "entirely alien" to "the Semite," reproduces the old fallacy of definite race-characters ; and Mr. Sayce, in remarking that "the immorality performed in the name of religion was the invention of the Semitic race itself" (*Anc. Emp.*, p. 203 ; contrast Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 83), after crediting the Semitic race with an ethical faculty alien to the Akkadian (above, p. 66), suggests another phase of the same error. There is nothing special to the Semites in the case save degree of development, similar phenomena being found in many savage religions, in Mexico, and in India. (Meyer in later passages and in his article on Ba'al in Roscher's *Lexikon* modifies his position as to Semitic *versus* other religions.) On the other hand, there was a chaste as well as an unchaste worship of the Phoenician Ashtoreth. Ashtoreth Karnaim, or Tanit, the Virgin, as opposed to Atergates and Annit, the Mother-Goddesses, had the characteristics of Artemis. Cp. Tiele, *Religion comparée*, as cited, pp. 318-9 ; Menzies, *History of Religion*, pp. 159, 168-171 ; Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, i, 91 ; Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 292, 458. For the rest, the cruelty of the Phoenician cults, in the matter of human sacrifice, was fully paralleled among the early Teutons. See Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 199 ; and the author's *Pagan Christs*, Pt. II, § 4.

§ 7. Ancient China.

Of all the ancient Asiatic systems that of China yields us the first clear biographical trace of a practical rationalist, albeit a rationalist stamped somewhat by Chinese conservatism. Confucius (*Kung-fu-tse* = Kung the Master) is a tangible person, despite some mythic accretions, whereas Zarathustra and Buddha are but doubtful possibilities, and even Lao-Tsze (said to have been born B.C. 604) is elusive.

Before Confucius (B.C. 551-478), it is evident, there had been a slackening in religious belief among the

governing classes. It is claimed for the Chinese, as for so many other races, that they had anciently a "pure" monotheism;¹ but the ascription, as usual, is misleading. They saw in the expanse of heaven the "Supreme" Power, not as a result of reflection on the claims of other deities among other races, but simply as expressing their primordial tribal recognition of that special God, before contact with the God-ideas of other peoples. Monotheistic in the modern sense they could not be. Concerning them as concerning the Semites we may say that the claim of a primary monotheism for them "is also true of all primitive totemistic or clannish communities. A man is born into a community with such a divine head, and the worship of that God is the only one possible to him."² Beside the belief in the Heaven-God, there stood beliefs in heavenly and earthly spirits, and in ancestors, who were worshipped with altars.³

The remark of Professor Legge (*Religions of China*, p. 11), that the relation of the names Shang-Ti = Supreme Ruler, and T'ien = the sky, "has kept the monotheistic element prominent in the religion proper of China *down to the present time*," may serve to avert disputation. It may be agreed that the Chinese were anciently "monotheists" in the way in which they are at present, when they worship spirits innumerable. When, however, Professor Legge further says (p. 16) that the ancient monotheism five thousand years ago was "in danger of being corrupted" by nature worship and divination, he puts in doubt the meaning of the other expression above cited. He states several times (pp. 46, 51, 52) that the old monotheism remains; but speaks (p. 84) of the mass of the people as "cut off from the worship of God for themselves." And see p. 91 as to ancestor-worship by the Emperor. Tiele (*Outlines*, p. 27) in comparison somewhat overstates the polytheistic aspect of the Chinese religion in his opening definition; but he adds the essential facts. Dr. Legge's remark that "the idea of revelation did not shock" the ancient Chinese (p. 13) is obscure. He is dealing with the ordinary Akkado-Babylonian astrology.

¹ Legge, *Religions of China*, 1880, pp. 11, 16; Douglas, *Confucianism and Taouism*, 1879, pp. 12, 82.

² Menzies, *History of Religion*, p. 158.

³ Legge, pp. 12, 19, 23, 25, 26; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 27; Douglas, p. 79.

Pauthier, on the contrary (*Chine Moderne*, 1853, p. 250), asserts that in China "no doctrine has ever been put forth as revealed."

As regards ancestral worship, we have record of a display of disregard for it by the lords of Lû in Confucius' time;¹ and the general attitude of Confucius himself, religious only in his adherence to old ceremonies, is incompatible with a devout environment. It has been disputed whether he makes a "skeptical denial of any relation between man and a living God";² but an authority who disputes this complains that his "avoiding the personal name of Tî, or God, and only using the more indefinite term Heaven," suggests "a coldness of temperament and intellect in the matter of religion."³ He was, indeed, above all things, a moralist; and concerning the spirits in general he taught that "To give one's self to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom."⁴ He would never express an opinion concerning the fate of souls,⁵ or encourage prayer;⁶ and in his redaction of the old records he seems deliberately to have eliminated mythological expressions.⁷

The view that there was a very early "arrest of growth" in the Chinese religion (Menzies, *History of Religion*, p. 108), "before the ordinary developments of *mythology* and doctrine, priesthood," etc., had "time to take place," seems untenable as to the mythology. The same writer had previously spoken (p. 107) of the Chinese system before Confucius as having "already *parted with* all savage and irrational elements." That Confucius would seek to eliminate these seems likely enough, though the documentary fact is disputed.

In the elder contemporary of Confucius, Lao-Tsze ("Old Philosopher"), the founder of Taouism, may be recognised another and more remarkable early free-thinker of a different stamp, in some essential respects

¹ Legge, p. 142.

² See the citations made by Legge, p. 5.

³ *Id.*, p. 139. Cp. Menzies, p. 109.

⁴ Legge, p. 140; cp. p. 117; Douglas, p. 81.

⁵ Legge, p. 117; Douglas, p. 68; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 29.

⁶ Tiele, p. 31; Legge, p. 143.

⁷ Tiele, pp. 31-2; Douglas, pp. 68, 84. But cp. Legge, pp. 123, 137.

much less conservative, and in intellectual cast markedly more original. Where Confucius was an admirer and student of antiquity, Lao-Tsze expressly put such concern aside,¹ seeking a law of life within himself, in a manner suggestive of much Indian and other Oriental thought. So far as our records go, he is the first known philosopher who denied that men could form an idea of deity, that being the infinite; and he avowedly evolved, by way of makeshift, the idea of a primordial and governing Reason (*Tau*), closely analogous to the *Logos* of later Platonism. Since the same idea is traceable in more primitive forms alike in the Babylonian and Brahmanic systems,² it is arguable that he may have derived it from one of these sources; but the problem is very obscure. In any case, his system is one of rationalistic pantheism.³

His personal relation to Confucius was that of a self-poised sage, impatient of the other's formalism and regard to prescription and precedent. Where they compare is in their avoidance of supernaturalism, and in the sometimes singular rationality of their views of social science; in which latter respect, however, they were the recipients and transmitters of an already classic tradition.⁴ Thus both had a strong bias to conservatism; and in Lao-Tsze it went the length of prescribing that the people should not be instructed.⁵ Despite this, it is not going too far to say that no ancient people appears to have produced sane thinkers and scientific moralists earlier than the Chinese. The Golden Rule, repeatedly formulated by Confucius, seems to be but a condensation on his part of doctrine he found in the older classics;⁶

¹ Douglas, pp. 179, 184.

² See the author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 214-220.

³ Pauthier, *Chine Moderne*, p. 351. There is a tradition that Lao-Tsze took his doctrine from an ancient sage who flourished before 1120 B.C.; and he himself (*Tau Têh King*, trans. by Chalmers, *The Speculations of Lao-Tsze*, 1868, ch. 41) cites doctrine as to *Tau* from "those who have spoken (before me)." Cp. cc. 22, 41, 62, 65, 70.

⁴ Cp. E. J. Simcox, *Primitive Civilisations*, 1894, ii, 18.

⁵ Pauthier, p. 358; Chalmers, pp. 14, 37.

⁶ Legge, p. 137.

and as against Lao-Tsze he is seen maintaining the practical form of the principle of reciprocity. The older man, like some later teachers, preached the rule of returning kindness for evil,¹ without leaving any biographical trace of such practice on his own part. Confucius, dealing with human nature as it actually is, argued that evil should be met by justice, and kindness with kindness, else the evil were as much fostered as the good.²

It is to be regretted that Christian writers should keep up the form of condemning Confucius (so Legge, p. 144; Douglas, p. 144) for a teaching the practice of which is normally possible, and is never transcended in their own Church, where the profession of returning good for evil merely constitutes one of the great hypocrisies of civilisation. On the other hand, Mr. Chalmers, who dedicates his translation of Lao-Tsze to Dr. Legge, actually taunts Lao-Tsze (p. 38) with absurdity in respect of *his* doctrine. Such is the sincerity of orthodox polemic. How little effect the self-abnegating teaching of Lao-Tsze, in turn, has had on *his* followers may be gathered from their very legends concerning him (Douglas, p. 182). There is a fallacy, further, in the Christian claim that Confucius put the Golden Rule in a lower form than that of the Gospels, in that he gave it the negative form, "Do *not* that which ye would *not* have done unto you." This is really the rational and valid form of the Rule. The positive form, unless construed in the restrictive sense, would merely prescribe a non-moral doing of favours in the hope of receiving favours in return.

Lao-Tsze, on his part, had reduced religion to a minimum. "There is not a word in the Tào Têh King [by Lao-Tsze] of the sixth century B.C. that savours either of superstition or religion."³ But the quietist and mystical philosophy of Lao-Tsze and the practicality of Confucius alike failed to check the growth of superstition

¹ *Tau Têh King*, as cited, pp. 38, 49, ch. 49, 63; Pauthier, p. 358; Legge, p. 223.

² Legge, p. 143; Douglas, p. 144.

³ Legge, p. 164. We do find, however, an occasional allusion to deity, as in the phrase "the Great Architect" (Chalmers' trans., 1868, c. lxxiv, p. 57), and "Heaven" is spoken of in a somewhat personalised sense. Still, Mr. Chalmers complains (p. xv) that Lao-Tsze did not recognise a personal God, but put "an indefinite, impersonal, and unconscious Tau" above all things (c. iv).

among the ever-increasing ignorant Chinese population. "In the works of Lieh-Tsze and Chwang-Tsze, followers of Lao-Tsze, two or three centuries later, we find abundance of grotesque superstition, though we are never sure how far those writers really believed the things they relate"—the old fatality, seen in Brahmanism, in Buddhism, in Egypt, in Islam, and in Christianity. Confucius himself was soon worshipped.¹ A reaction against him set in after a century or two, doctrines of pessimism on the one hand, and of universal love on the other, finding a hearing;² but the influence of the great Confucian teacher Mencius (Meng-Tse) carried his school through the struggle. "In his teaching, the religious element retires still further into the background"³ than in that of Confucius; and he is memorable for his insistence on the remarkable principle of Confucius, that "the people are born good"; that they are the main part of the State; and that it is the ruler's fault if they go astray.⁴ Some rulers seem to have fully risen to this view of things, for we have an account of a rationalistic duke, who lived earlier than 250 B.C., refusing to permit the sacrifice of a man as scapegoat on his behalf; and in the year 166 B.C. such sacrifices were permanently abolished by the Han Emperor Wen.⁵ But Mencius, who, as a sociologist, excels not only Lao-Tsze but Confucius, put his finger on the central force in Chinese history when he taught that "it is only men of education who, without a certain livelihood, are able to maintain a fixed heart. As to the people, if they have not a certain livelihood, it follows that they will not have a fixed heart."⁶ So clearly was the truth seen in China over two thousand years ago. But whether under feudalism or under imperialism, under anarchy or under peace—and the teachings of Lao-Tsze

¹ Legge, p. 147; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 33.

² Legge, *Life and Works of Mencius*, 1875, pp. 29, 50, 77, etc.

³ Tiele, p. 33.

⁴ Legge, *Life and Works of Mencius*, pp. 44, 47, 56, 57, etc.

⁵ Miss Simcox, *Primitive Civilisations*, ii, 36-37, following Chavannes.

⁶ Legge's *Mencius*, p. 49; cp. p. 48.

and Mencius combined to discredit militarism¹—the Chinese mass always pullulated on cheap food, at a low standard of comfort, and in a state of utter ignorance. Hence the cult of Confucius was maintained among them only by recognising their normal superstition; but on that basis it has remained secure, despite competition, and even a term of early persecution. One iconoclastic emperor, the founder of the Ch'in or Ts'in dynasty (B.C. 221 or 212), sought to extirpate Confucianism as a means to a complete reconstruction of the government; but the effort came to nothing.²

In the same way Lao-Tsze came to be worshipped as a God³ under the religion called Taouism, a title sometimes mistranslated as rationalism, "a name admirably calculated to lead the mind astray as to what the religion is."⁴ It would seem as if the older notion of the *Tau*, philosophically purified by Lao-Tsze, remained a popular basis for his school, and so wrought its degradation. The Taoists or Tao-sse "do their utmost to be as unreasonable as possible."⁵ They soon reverted from the philosophic mysticism of Lao-Tsze, after a stage of indifferentism,⁶ to a popular supernaturalism,⁷ which "the cultivated Chinese now regard with unmixed contempt";⁸ the crystallised common-sense of Confucius, on the other hand, allied as it is with the official spirit of ceremonialism, retaining its hold as an esoteric code for the learned. The evolution has thus closely resembled that which took place in India.

Nowhere, perhaps, is our sociological lesson more clearly to be read than in China. Centuries before our

¹ Cp. Legge's *Mencius*, pp. 47, 131; Chalmers' *Lao-Tsze*, pp. 23, 28, 53, 58 (cc. xxx, xxxi, xxxvi, lxvii, lxxiv); Douglas, *Taouism*, cc. ii, iii.

² Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 147. The ruler in question seems to have been of non-Chinese descent. E. H. Parker, *China: her History, Diplomacy, and Commerce*, 1901, p. 18.

³ Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 159.

⁴ *Id.*, p. 60.

⁵ Tiele, p. 37.

⁶ Douglas, p. 222.

⁷ *Id.*, p. 239.

⁸ Tiele, p. 35; Douglas, p. 287. Taouism, however, has a rather noteworthy ethical code. See Douglas, ch. vi.

era it had a rationalistic literature, an ethic no less earnest and far more sane than that of the Hebrews, and a line of known teachers as remarkable in their way as those of ancient Greece who flourished about the same period. But where even Greece, wrought upon by all the other cultures of antiquity, ultimately retrograded, till under Christianity it stayed at a Chinese level of unprogressiveness for a thousand years, isolated China, helped by no neighbouring culture adequate to the need, has stagnated as regards the main mass of its life, despite some political and other fluctuations, till our own day. Its social problem, like that of India, is now more or less dependent, unfortunately, on the solutions that may be reached in Europe, where the problem is only relatively more mature, not fundamentally different.

§ 8. *Mexico and Peru.*

In the religions of pre-Christian Mexico and Peru we have peculiarly interesting examples of "early" religious systems, flourishing at some such culture-level as the ancient Akkadian, in full play at the time of the European Renaissance. In Mexico a "high" ethical code, as the phrase goes, was held concurrently with the most frightful indulgence in human sacrifice, sustained by the continuous practice of indecisive war and the interest of a vast priesthood. In this system had been developed all the leading features of those of the Old World—the identification of all the Gods with the Sun; the worship of fire, and the annual renewal of it by special means; the conception of God-sacrifice and of communion with the God by the act of eating his slain representative; the belief in a Virgin-Mother-Goddess; the connection of humanitarian ethic with the divine command; the opinion that celibacy, as a state of superior virtue, is incumbent on most priests and on all would-be saints; the substitution of a sacramental bread for the "body and blood" of the God-Man; the idea of an interceding Mother-Goddess; the hope of a coming Saviour; the

regular practice of prayer; exorcism, special indulgences, confession, absolution, fasting, and so on.¹ In Peru, also, many of those conceptions were in force; but the limitation of the power and numbers of the priesthood by the imperial system of the Incas, and the state of peace normal in their dominions, prevented the Mexican development of human sacrifice.

It seems probable that the Toltecs, who either fled before or were for the most part driven out by the Aztecs a few centuries before Cortes, were a less warlike and more humane people, with an unbloody worship. Their God, Quetzalcoatl, retained through fear by the Aztecs,² was a benign deity opposed to human sacrifice, apparently rather a late purification or partial rationalisation of an earlier God-type than a primitively harmless conception.³ In that case their overthrow would stand for the military inferiority of the higher and more rational civilisation⁴ to the lower and more religious, which in turn, however, was latterly being destroyed by its enormously burdensome military and priestly system, and may even be held to have been ruined by its own superstitious fears.⁵

Among the recognisable signs of normal progress in the ordinary Aztec religion were (1) the general recognition of the Sun as the God really worshipped in all the temples of the deities with special names;⁶ (2) the

¹ Details are given in the author's *Pagan Christs*, Part iv.

² Réville, Hibbert Lectures, *On the Native Religions of Mexico and Peru*, 1884, pp. 62-67.

³ J. G. Müller, *Geschichte der Amerikanischen Urreligionen*, ed. 1867, pp. 577-590; H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, iii, 279. (Passage cited in author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 402-3; where is also noted Dr. Tylor's early view, discarded later, that Quetzalcoatl was a real personage.)

⁴ Cp. Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, Kirk's ed., 1890, p. 41.

⁵ Réville, p. 66.

⁶ J. G. Müller, as cited, pp. 473-4; Réville, p. 46. Dr. Réville speaks of the worship of the unifying deity as pretty much "effaced" by that of the lower Gods. It seems rather to have been a priestly effort to syncretise these. Still, such an effacement did take place, as we have seen, in Central Asia in ancient times, after a syncretic idea had been reached (above, p. 45). As to the alleged monotheism of King Netzahuatl (or Netzahualcoyotl), of Tezcuco, mentioned above, p. 39, see Lang, *Making of Religion*, p. 270, note, and p. 282; Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, as cited, p. 92; and J. G. Müller, as cited, pp. 473-4, 480.

substitution in some cults of baked bread-images for a crucified human victim. The question arises whether the Aztecs, but for their overwhelming priesthood, might conceivably have risen above their system of human sacrifices, as the Aryan Hindus had done in an earlier age. Their material civilisation was at several points superior to that which the Spaniards put in its place; and their priesthood, being a leisured and wealthy class, might have developed intellectually as did the Brahmans,¹ if its economic basis had been changed. But only a conquest or other great political convulsion could conceivably have overturned the vast cultus of human sacrifice, which overran all life, and cherished war as a means of procuring victims.

In Peru, again, we find civilisation advancing in respect of the innovation of substituting statuettes for wives and slaves in the tombs of the rich; and we have already noted² the remarkable records of the avowed unbelief of several Incas in the divinity of the nationally worshipped Sun. For the rest, there was the dubious quasi-monotheistic cult of the Creator-God, Pachacamac, concerning whom every fresh discussion raises fresh doubt.³

Mr. Lang, as usual, leans to the view that Pachacamac stands for a primordial and "elevated" monotheism (*Making of Religion*, pp. 263-270), while admitting the slightness of the evidence. Garcilasso, the most eminent authority, who, however, is contradicted by others, represents that the conception of Pachacamac as Creator, needing no temple or sacrifice, was "philosophically" reached by the Incas and their wise men (Lang, p. 262). The historical fact seems to be that a race subdued by the Incas, the Yuncas, had one temple to this deity; and that the Incas adopted the cult. Garcilasso says the Yuncas had human sacrifices and idols, which the Incas abolished, setting up their monotheistic cult in that one temple. This is sufficiently unlikely; and it may very well have been the fact that the Yuncas had offered no sacrifices. But if they

¹ As to the capabilities of the Aztec language, see Bancroft, *Native Races*, ii, 727-8 (quoted in *Pagan Christs*, p. 416, note).

² Above, p. 22. Cp. Lang, as last cited. pp. 263, 282.

³ Cp. Kirk's ed. of Prescott's *Conquest of Peru*, 1889, p. 44; Réville, pp. 189-190; Lang, as cited below.

did not, it was because their material conditions, like those of the Australians and Fuegians, had not facilitated the practice; and in that case their "monotheism" likewise would merely represent the ignorant simplicity of a clan cult. (Compare Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii, 335 sq.; Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 52.) On the other hand, *if* the Incas had set up a cult without sacrifices to a so-called One God, their idea *would* be philosophical, as taking into account the multitude of clan-cults as well as their own national worships, and transcending these.

But the outstanding sociological fact in Incarial Peru was the absolute subjection of the mass of the people; and though its material development and political organisation were comparable to those of ancient Persia under the Akhamenidæ, so that the Spanish Conquest stood here for mere destruction, there is no reason to think that at the best its intellectual life could have risen higher than that of pre-Alexandrian Egypt, to which it offers so many resemblances. The Incas' schools were for the nobility only.¹ Rationalistic Incas and high priests might have ruled over a docile unlettered multitude, gradually softening their moral code, in connection with their rather highly-developed doctrine (resembling the Egyptian) of a future state. But these seem the natural limits, in the absence of contact with another civilisation not too disparate for a fruitful union.

In Mexico, on the other hand, an interaction of native cultures had already occurred to some purpose; and the strange humanitarianism of the man-slaying priests, who made free public hospitals of part of their blood-stained temples,² suggests a possibility of esoteric mental culture among them. They had certainly gone relatively far in their moral code, as apart from their atrocious creed of sacrifice, even if we discount the testimony of the benevolent priest Sahagun;³ and they had the beginnings of a system of education for the middle classes.⁴

¹ Réville, p. 152, citing Garcilasso. See same page for a story of resistance to the invention of an alphabet.

² Réville, p. 50, citing Torquemada, l. viii, c. 20, *end*.

³ *History of the Affairs of New Spain*, French trans., 1880, l. vi, c. 7, pp. 342-3. Cp. Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, Kirk's ed. pp. 31, 33.

⁴ Prescott, p. 34.

But unless one of the States which habitually warred for captives should have conquered the others—in which case a strong ruler might have put an end to the wholesale religious slaughter of his own subjects as appears to have been done anciently in Mesopotamia—the priests in all likelihood would never have transcended their hideous hallucination of sacrifice. Their murdered civilisation is thus the “great perhaps” of sociology; organised religion being the most sinister factor in the problem.

§ 9. *The Common Forces of Degeneration.*

It is implied more or less in all the foregoing summaries that there is an inherent tendency in all systematised and instituted religion to degenerate intellectually and morally, save for the constant corrective activity of freethought. It may be well, however, to note specifically the forms or phases of the tendency.

1. Dogmatic and ritual religion being, to begin with, a more or less general veto on fresh thinking, it lies in its nature that the religious person is as such less intelligently alive to all problems of thought and conduct than he otherwise might be—a fact which at least outweighs, in a whole society, the gain from imposing a terrorised conformity on the less well-biassed types. Wherever conduct is a matter of sheer obedience to a superhuman code, it is *ipso facto* uncritical and unprogressive. Thus the history of most religions is a record of declines and reformations, each new affirmation of freethought *ad hoc* being in turn erected into a set of sheer commands. To set up the necessary ferment of corrective thought even for a time, there seems to be needed (*a*) a provocation to the intelligence, as in the spectacle of conflict of cults; and (*b*) a provocation to the moral sense and to self-interest through a burdensome pressure of rites or priestly exactions. An exceptional personality of course may count for much in the making of a movement.

2. The fortunes of such reactions are determined by

socio-economic or political conditions. They are seen to be at a minimum, as to energy and social effect, in the conditions of greatest social invariability, as in ancient Egypt, where progress in thought, slow at best, was confined to the priestly and official class, and never affected popular culture.

3. In the absence of social conditions fitted to raise popular levels of life and thought, every religious system tends to worsen intellectually in the sense of adding to its range of superstition—that is, of ignorant and unreasoning belief. Credulity has its own momentum. Even the possession of liminary sacred books cannot check this tendency—*e.g.*, Hinduism, Judaism, Moham-medanism, Mazdeism, Christianity up till the age of doubt and science, and the systems of ancient Egypt, Babylon, and post-Confucian China. This worsening can take place alongside of a theoretic purification of belief within the sphere of the educated theological class.

Christian writers have undertaken to show that such deterioration went on continuously in India from the beginning of the Vedic period, popular religion sinking from Varuna to Indra, from Indra to the deities of the Atharva Veda, and from these to the Puranas (cp. Dr. J. Murray Mitchell, *Hinduism Past and Present*, 1885, pp. 22, 25, 26, 54). The argument, being hostile in bias from the beginning, ignores or denies the element of intellectual advance in the Upanishads and other later literature; but it holds good of the general phenomena. It holds good equally, however, of the history of Christianity in the period of the supremacy of ignorant faith and absence of doubt and science; and is relatively applicable to the religion of the uneducated mass at any time and place.

On the other hand, it is not at all true that religious history is from the beginning, in any case, a process of mere degeneration from a pure ideal. Simple statements as to primitive ideas are found to be misleading because of their simplicity. They *can* connote only the ethic of the life conditions of the worshipper. Now, we have seen (p. 28) that small primitive peoples living at peace and in communism, or in some respects well placed, may be on that account in certain moral respects superior to the average or mass of more civilised and more intelligent peoples. [As to the kindness and unselfishness of some savages, living an almost communal life, and as to the

scrupulous honesty of others, there is plenty of evidence—*e.g.*, as to Andaman islanders, Max Müller, *Anthrop. Relig.*, citing Colonel Cadell, p. 177 ; as to Malays and Papuans, Dr. Russel Wallace, *Malay Archipelago*, p. 595 (but cp. pp. 585, 587, 589) ; as to Esquimaux, Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, pp. 15, 37, 115 (but cp. pp. 41-2). In these and other cases unselfishness within the tribe is the concomitant of the communal life, and represents no conscious ethical volition, being concurrent with phases of the grossest tribal egoism. In the case of the preaching of unselfishness to the young by the old among the Australians, where Lubbock and his authorities see “the tyranny of the old” (*Origin of Civilisation*, 5th ed., pp. 451-2) Mr. Lang sees a pure primeval ethic. Obviously the other is the true explanation.]

The transition from that state to one of war and individualism is in a sense degeneration ; but, broadly speaking, it is by that path that progress in civilisation has been made, the large military States ultimately securing within themselves some of the conditions for special development of thought, arts, and knowledge. The residual truth is that the simple religion of the harmless tribe is *pro tanto* superior to the instituted religion of the more civilised nation with greater heights and lower depths of life, the popular religion in the latter case standing for the worse conditions. But the simple religion did not spring from any higher stage of knowledge. The recent theorem of Mr. Lang (*The Making of Religion*, 1898) as to religion having originally been a pure and highly ethical monotheism, from which it degenerated into animism and non-moral polytheism, is at best a misreading of the facts just stated. Mr. Lang never asks what “Supreme Being” and “monotheism” mean for savages who know nothing of other men’s religions : he virtually takes all the connotations for granted. For the rest, his theory is demonstrably wrong in its ethical interpretation of many anthropological facts, and as it stands is quite irreconcilable with the law of evolution, since it assumes an abstract monotheism as primordial. In general it approximates scientifically to the last century doctrine of the superiority of savagery to civilisation. (See it criticised in the author’s *Studies in Religious Fallacy*.)

4. Even primary conditions of material well-being, if not reacted upon by social science or a movement of freethought, may in a comparatively advanced civilisation promote religious degeneration. Thus abundance of food is favourable to multiplication of sacrifice, and

so to priestly predominance.¹ The possession of domesticated animals, so important to civilisation, lends itself to sacrifice in a specially demoralising degree. But abundant cereal food-supply, making abundant population, may greatly promote human sacrifice—e.g., Mexico.

The error of Mr. Lang's method is seen in the use he makes (work cited, pp. 286–289, 292) of the fact that certain "low" races—as the Australians, Andamanese, Bushmen, and Fuegians—offer no animal sacrifice. He misses the obvious significance of the facts that these unwarlike races have as a rule no domesticated animals and no agriculture, and that their food supply is thus in general precarious. The Andamanese, sometimes described (Malthus, *Essay on Population*, ch. iii, and refs.; G. W. Earl, *Papuans*, 1853, pp. 150–1) as very ill-fed, are sometimes said to be well supplied with fish and game (Peschel, *Races of Man*, Eng. trans. 1876, p. 147; M. Müller, *Anthrop. Rel.*, citing Cadell, p. 177); but in any case they have had no agriculture, and seem to have only occasional animal food in the shape of a wild hog (Colebrooke in *Asiatic Researches*, iv, 390). The Australians and Fuegians, again, have often great difficulty in feeding themselves (Peschel, pp. 148, 159, 334; Darwin, *Voyage*, c. 10). In the case, however, of the primitive Vedic Aryans, well supplied with animals, sacrifices were abundant, and tended to become more so (Müller, *Nat. Relig.*, pp. 136, 185; *Physical Relig.*, p. 105; but cp. pp. 98, 101; Mitchell, *Hinduism*, p. 43; Lefmann, *Geschichte des alten Indiens*, in Oncken's series, 1890, pp. 49, 430–1). Of these sacrifices that of the horse seems to have been in Aryan use in a most remote period (cp. M. Müller, *Nat. Rel.*, pp. 524–5; H. Böttger, *Sonnencult der Indogermanen*, Breslau, 1891, pp. 41–44; Preller, *Römische Mythologie*, ed. Köhler, pp. 102, 299, 323; *Griechische Mythologie*, 2te Aufg. i, 462; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii, 315). Dr. Müller's remark (*Physical Religion*, p. 106), that 'the idea of sacrifice did not exist at a *very* early period,' because there is no common Aryan term for it, counts for nothing, as he admits (p. 107) that the Sanskrit word cannot be traced back to any more general root; and he admits the antiquity of the *practice*. On this cp. Mitchell, *Hinduism*, pp. 37–38; and the author's *Pagan Christs*, p. 174. The reform in Hindu sacrifice, consummated by Buddhism, has been noted above.

5. Even scientific knowledge, while enabling the

¹ "The priest says, 'the spirit is hungry,' the fact being that he himself is hungry. He advises the killing of an animal" (Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, p. 307).

thoughtful to correct their religious conceptions, in some forms lends itself easily to the promotion of popular superstition. Thus the astronomy of the Babylonians, while developing some skepticism, served in general to encourage divination and fortune-telling; and seems to have had the same effect when communicated to the Chinese, the Hindus, and the Hebrews, all of whom, however, practised divination previously on other bases.

6. Finally, the development of the arts of sculpture and painting, unaccompanied by due intellectual culture, tends to keep religion at a low anthropomorphic level, and worsens its psychology by inviting image-worship.¹ It is not that the earlier and non-artistic religions are not anthropomorphic, but that they give more play for intellectual imagination than does a cult of images. But where the arts have been developed, idolatry has always arisen save when resisted by a special activity or revival of freethought to that end; and even in Protestant Christendom, where image-worship is tabooed, religious pictures now promote popular credulity and ritualism as they did in the Italian Renaissance.² So manifold are the forces of intellectual degeneration—degeneration, that is, from an attained ideal or stage of development, not from any primordial knowledge.

¹ On the general tendency cp. Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, pp. 77-84.

² In the windows of the shop of the S. P. C. K., in London, may be commonly seen large displays of reproduced Madonna-pictures, by Catholic artists, at popular prices.

CHAPTER IV.

RELATIVE FREETHOUGHT IN ISRAEL

THE modern critical analysis of the Hebrew Sacred Books has made it sufficiently clear that in Jewish as in all other ancient history progress in religion was by way of evolving an ethical and sole deity out of normal primeval polytheism.¹ What was special to the Hebrews was the set of social conditions under which the evolution took place. Through these conditions it was that the relative freethought which rejected normal polytheism was so far favoured as to lead to a pronounced monotheistic cultus, though not to a philosophic monotheism.

§ 1.

As seen in their earliest historical documents (especially portions of the Book of Judges), the Hebrews are a group of agricultural and pastoral but warlike tribes of Semitic speech, with household Gods and local deities,² living among communities at the same or a higher culture stage. Their ancestral legends show similar religious practice.³ Of the Hebrew tribes some may have sojourned for a time in Egypt; but this is uncertain, the written record being a late and in large part deliberately fictitious construction.⁴ At one time twelve such tribes may have confederated, in conformity with a common ancient superstition, seen in Arab and Greek history as well as in the Jewish, as to the number twelve. As they advanced in civilisation, on a basis of city life existing among a population settled in Canaan

¹ Compare the author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 61-95.

² Jud. xvii, xviii.

³ Gen. xxxi. 19, 34, 35.

⁴ Compare Hugo Winckler, *Geschichte Israels*, i, 56-58.

before them, parts of which they conquered, one of their public cults, that of Yahu or Yahweh, finally fixed at Jerusalem, became politically important. The special worshippers of this God (supposed to have been at first a Thunder-God or Nature-God)¹ were in that sense monotheists; but not otherwise than kindred neighbouring communities such as the Ammonites and Moabites and Edomites, each of which had its special God, like the cities of Babylonia and Egypt. But that the earlier conceptions of the people had assumed a multiplicity of Gods is clear from the fact that even in the later literary efforts to impose the sole cult of Yahweh on the people, the plural name *Elohim*, "Powers" or "Gods" (in general, things to be feared),² is retained, either alone or with that of Yahweh prefixed, though cosmology had previously been written in Yahweh's name. The Yahwists did not scruple to combine an Elohist narrative, varying from theirs in cosmology and otherwise, with their own.³

As to the original similarity of Hebraic and other Canaanite religions cp. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, §§ 309-311 (i, 372-376); Kuenen, i, 223; Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 440; Winckler, *Geschichte Israels*, passim; Réville, *Prolégomènes de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1881, p. 85. "Before being monotheistic, Israel was simply *monolatrous*, and even that only in its religious *élite*" (Réville). "Their [the Canaanites'] worship was the same in principle as that of Israel, but it had a higher organisation" (Menzies, *History of Religion*, p. 179:

¹ Compare Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 87; *Hist. comp. des anciennes religions*, p. 342 sq.; Kuenen, *The Religion of Israel*, iii, 35, 44, 398. Winckler (*Geschichte Israels*, i, 34-38) pronounces the original Semitic Yahu, and the Yahweh evolved from him, to have been each a "Wetter-Gott."

² The word is applied to the apparition of Samuel in the story of the Witch of Endor (1 Sam. xxviii, 13).

³ The unlearned reader may here be reminded that in Gen. i the Hebrew word translated "God" is "Elohim," and that the phrase in Gen. ii. rendered "the Lord God" in our versions is in the original "Yahweh-Elohim." The first chapter, with its plural deity, is, however, probably the later as well as the more dignified narrative, and represents the influence of Babylonian quasi-science. See, for a good general account of the case, *The Witness of Assyria*, by C. Edwards, 1893, c. ii. Cp. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, Eng. trans., pp. 196-308; E. J. Fripp, *The Composition of the Book of Genesis*, 1892, passim; Driver, *Introd. to the Lit. of the Old Testament*, 1891, pp. 18-19.

cp. Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 85–89). On the side of the traditional view, Mr. Lang, while sharply challenging most of the propositions of the higher critics, affirms that “*we know* that Israel had, in an early age, the conception of the moral Eternal; we know that, at an early age, the conception was contaminated and anthropomorphised; and we know that it was rescued, in a great degree, from this corruption, while always retaining its original ethical aspect and sanction” (*Making of Religion*, p. 295). If “we know” this, the discussion is at an end. But Mr. Lang’s sole documentary basis for the assertion is just the fabricated record, reluctantly abandoned by theological scholars as such. When this is challenged Mr. Lang falls back on the position that such low races as the Australians and Fuegians have a “moral Supreme Being,” and that therefore Israel “must” have had one (p. 309). It will be found, however, that the ethic of these races is perfectly primitive, on Mr. Lang’s own showing, and that his estimate is a misinterpretation. As to their Supreme Beings it will suffice to compare Mr. Lang’s *Making of Religion*, cc. ix, xii, with his earlier *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, i, 168, 335; ii, 6, etc. He has now merely added the ambiguous and misleading epithet “Supreme,” stressing it indefinitely, to the ordinary God-idea of the lower races. (Cp. Cox, *Mythology of the Aryan Races*, ed. 1882, p. 155; and K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Scientific Mythology*, Eng. trans., p. 184.)

There being thus no highly imagined “moral Eternal” in the religion of primitive man, the Hebrews were originally in the ordinary position. Their early practice of human sacrifice is implied in the legend of Abraham and Isaac, and in the story of Jephthah. (Cp. Micah, vi, 7, and Kuenen on the passage, i, 237.) In their reputed earliest prophetic books we find them addicted to divination (Hosea, iv, 12; Micah v, 12. Cp. the prohibition in Lev. xx, 6; also 2 Kings xxiii, 24, and Isa. iii, 2: as to the use of the ephod, teraphim, and urim and thummim, see Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, Eng. trans. i, 97–100) and to polytheism. (Amos, v, 26, viii, 14; Hosea, i, 13, 17, etc. Cp. Jud. viii, 27; 1 Sam. vii, 3.) These things Mr. Lang seems to admit (p. 309, *note*), despite his previous claim; but he builds (p. 332) on the fact that the Hebrews showed little concern about a future state—that “early Israel, having, so far as we know, a singular lack of interest in the future of the soul, was born to give himself up to developing, undisturbed, the theistic conception, the belief in a righteous Eternal”—whereas later Greeks and Romans, like Egyptians, were much concerned about life after death. Mr. Lang’s own general theory would really require that *all* peoples at a certain stage

should act like the Israelites ; but he suspends it in the interest of the orthodox view as to the early Hebrews. At the same time he omits to explain why the Hebrews failed to adopt the future-state creed when they were "contaminated"—a proposition hardly reconcilable, on any view, with the sentence just quoted. The solution, however, is simple. Israel was not at all "singular" in the matter. The *early* Greeks and Romans (cp. as to Hades the *Iliad*, *passim*; *Odyssey*, B. xi, *passim*; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 209, as to the myth of Persephone; and Preller, *Römische Mythologie*, ed. Köhler, 1865, pp. 452-5, as to the early Romans) like the early Vedic Aryans (Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 117; Müller, *Anthropol. Relig.*, p. 269), and the early Babylonians and Assyrians (Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 181-2; Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 364) took little thought of a future state.

This attitude has again been erroneously regarded (*e.g.*, Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*, p. 35) as peculiar to the Greeks. Mr. Lang's assumption may in fact be overthrown by the single case of the Phoenicians, who showed no more concern about a future life than did the Hebrews (see Canon Rawlinson's *History of Phoenicia*, 1889, pp. 351-2), but who are not pretended to have given themselves up much to "developing, undisturbed, the belief in a righteous Eternal." The truth seems to be that in all the early progressive and combative civilisations the main concern was as to the continuance of *this* life. On that head the Hebrews were as solicitous as any (cp. Kuenen, i, 65); and they habitually practised divination on that score. Further, they attached the very highest importance to the continuance of the individual in his offspring. The idea of a future state is first found highly developed in the long-lived cults of the long-civilised but unprogressive Egyptians; and the Babylonians were developing in the same direction. Yet the Hebrews took it up (see the evidence in Schürer, *Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, Eng. trans., Div. II, vol. ii, p. 179) just when, according to Mr. Lang, their cult was "rescued, in a great degree, from corruption"; and, generally speaking, it was in the stage of maximum monotheism that they reached the maximum of irrationality. For the rest, belief in immortality is found highly developed in a sociologically "degenerate" and unprogressive people such as the Tasmanians (Müller, *Anthrop. Rel.*, p. 433), who are yet primitively pure on Mr. Lang's hypothesis.

This primary polytheism is seen to the full in that constant resort of Israelites to neighbouring cults, against which so much of the Hebrew doctrine is

directed. To understand their practice the modern reader has to get rid of the hallucination imposed on Christendom by its idea of revelation. The cult of Yahweh was no primordial Hebrew creed, deserted by backsliding idolaters, but a finally successful tyranny of one local cult over others. It is probable that it was originally not Palestinian but Sinaitic, and that Yahweh became the God of Caleb-Judah only under David.¹ Therefore, without begging the question as to the moral sincerity of the prophets and others who identified Yahwism with morality, we must always remember that they were on their own showing devotees of a special local worship, and so far fighting for their own influence. Similar prophesying may conceivably have been carried on in connection with the same or other God-names in other localities, and the extant prophets freely testify that they had Yahwistic opponents; but the circumstance that Yahweh was worshipped at Jerusalem without any image might be an important cause of differentiation in the case of that cult. In any case it must have been through simple "exclusivism" that they reached any form of "monotheism."²

The inveterate usage, in the Bible-making period, of forging and interpolating ancient or pretended writings, makes it impossible to construct any detailed history of the rise of Yahwism. We can but proceed upon data which do not appear to lend themselves to the purposes of the later adaptors. In that way we see cause to believe that at one early centre the so-called ark of Yahweh contained various objects held to have supernatural virtue.³ In the older historic documents it has, however, no such sacredness as accrues to it later,⁴ and no great traditional prestige. This ark, previously moved from place to place as a fetish,⁵ is said to have

¹ Hugo Winckler, *Geschichte Israels*, i, 29-30.

² Cp. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 398.

³ See the myth of the offerings put in it by the Philistines (1 Sam. vi).

⁴ 1 Sam. iii, 3. Cp. ch. ii, 12-22. Contrast Lev. xvi, 2, ff.

⁵ 1 Sam. iv, 3-11. Cp. v, vii, 2.

been transferred to Jerusalem by the early king David,¹ whose story, like that of his predecessor Saul and his son Solomon, is in part blended with myth.

As to David, compare 1 Sam. xvi, 18, with xvii, 33, 42. Daoud (= Dodo = Dumzi = Tammuz = Adonis) was a Semitic deity (Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 52-57, and art., "The Names of the First Three Kings of Israel," in *Modern Review*, Jan., 1884), whom David resembles as an inventor of the lyre (Amos, vi, 5; cp. Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 2 Theil, 1836, p. 3). But Saul and Solomon also were God-names (Sayce, as cited), as was Samuel (*Id.*, pp. 54, 181; cp. Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, Eng. trans., p. 120); and when we note these data, and further the plain fact that Samson is a solar myth, being a personage Evemerised from Samas, the Sun-God, we are prepared to find further traces of Evemeristic redaction in the Hebrew books. To say nothing of other figures in the Book of Judges, we find that Jacob and Joseph were old Canaanitish deities (Sayce, Lectures, p. 51; Records of the Past, New Series, v, 48; Hugo Winckler, *Geschichte Israels*, ii, 57-77); and that Moses, as might be expected, was a name for more than one Semitic God (Sayce, pp. 46-47), and in particular stood for a Sun-God. Abraham and Isaac in turn appear to be ancient deities (Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.*, i, 374, § 309; Hugo Winckler, *Gesch. Israels*, ii, 20-49). Miriam was probably in similar case (cp. *Pagan Christs*, pp. 157-8). On an analysis of the Joshua myth as redacted, further, we may surmise another reduction of an ancient cult to the form of history, perhaps obscuring the true original of the worship of Mary and Jesus.

It seems probable, finally, that such figures as Elijah, who ascends to heaven in a fiery chariot, and Elisha, the "bald head" and miracle-worker, are similar constructions of personages out of Sun-God lore. In such material lies part of the refutation of the thesis of Renan (*Histoire des langues sémitiques*, 2e édit. pp. 7, 485) that the Semites were natural monotheists, devoid of mythology. [Renan is followed in whole or in part by Nöldeke, *Sketches from Eastern History*, Eng. trans., p. 6; Soury, *Religion of Israel*, Eng. trans., pp. 2, 10; Spiegel, *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, i, 389; also Roscher, Draper, Peschel, and Bluntschli, as cited by Goldziher, *Mythology among the Hebrews*, Eng. trans., p. 4, note. On the other side compare Goldziher, ch. i; Steinthal's *Prometheus and Samson*, Eng. trans. (with Goldziher), pp. 391, 428, etc., and

¹ 2 Sam. vi.

his *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und den Römern*, 1863, pp. 15-17; Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, i, 225; Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*, p. 49; Ewald, *History of Israel*, Eng. trans., 4th ed., i, 38-40; Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, ed. 1880, i, 345 sq.; *Nat. Rel.*, p. 314.] Renan's view seems to be generally connected with the assumption that life in a "desert" makes a race for ever unimaginative or unitary in its thought. The *Arabian Nights* might be supposed a sufficient proof to the contrary. The historic truth seems to be that, stage for stage, the ancient Semites were as mythological as any other race; but that (to say nothing of the Babylonians and Assyrians) the mythologies of the Hebrews and of the Arabs were alike suppressed as far as possible in their monotheistic stage. Compare Renan's own admissions, pp. 27, 110, 475, and *Histoire du Peuple d'Israël*, i, 49-50.

At other places, however, Yahweh was symbolised and worshipped in the image of a young bull,¹ a usage associated with the neighbouring Semitic cult of Molech, but probably indigenous, or at least early, in the case of Yahweh also. A God, for such worshippers, needed to be represented by something, if he were to be individualised as against others; and where there was not an ark or a sacred stone or special temple or idol there could be no cult at all. "The practices of ancient religion require a fixed meeting-place between the worshippers and their God."² The pre-Exilic history of Yahweh-worship seems to be in large part that of a struggle between the devotees of the imageless worship fixed to the temple at Jerusalem, and other worships, with or without images, at other and less influential shrines.

So far as can be gathered from the documents, it was long before monotheistic pretensions were made in connection with Yahwism. They must in the first instance have seemed not only tyrannical but blasphemous to the devotees of the old local shrines, who in the earlier Hebrew writings figure as perfectly good Yahwists; and they clearly had no durable success before the period of the Exile. Some three hundred years after

¹ 1 Kings xii, 28; Hosea viii, 4-6. Cp. Jud. viii, 27; Hosea viii, 5.

² Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 196. But see above, p. 77.

the supposed period of David,¹ and again eighty years later, we meet with ostensible traces² of a movement for the special aggrandisement of the Yahweh cult and the suppression of the others which competed with it, as well as of certain licentious and vicious practices carried on in connection with Yahweh worship. Concerning these, it could be claimed by those who had adhered to the simpler tradition of one of the early worships that they were foreign importations. They were, in fact, specialities of a rich ancient society, and were either native to Canaanite cities which the Hebrews had captured, or copied by them from such cities. But the fact that they were thus, on the showing of the later Yahwistic records, long associated with Yahwist practice, proves that there was no special elevation about Yahwism originally.

Even the epithet translated "Holy" (*Kadosh*) had originally no high moral significance. It simply meant "set apart," "not common" (cp. Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, i, 43; Wellhausen, *Israel*, in *Prolegomena* vol., p. 499); and the special substantive (*Kadesh* and *Kedeshah*) was actually the name for the most degraded ministrants of both sexes in the licentious worship (see Deut. xxiii, 17, 18, and *marg. Rev. Vers.* Cp. 1 Kings xiv, 25; xv, 12; 2 Kings xxiii, 7). On the question of early Hebrew ethics it is somewhat misleading to cite Wellhausen (so Mr. Lang, *Making of Religion*, p. 304) as saying (*Israel*, p. 437) that religion inspired law and morals in Israel with exceptional purity. In the context Wellhausen has said that the starting-point of Israel was normal; and he writes in the *Prolegomena* (p. 302) that "good and evil in Hebrew mean primarily nothing more than salutary and hurtful: the application of the words to virtue and sin is a secondary one, these being regarded as serviceable or hurtful in their effects."

§ 2.

Given the co-existence of a multitude of local cults, and of various local Yahweh-worships, it is conceivable that the Yahwists of Jerusalem, backed by a priest-ridden king, should seek to limit all worship to their

¹ 11th cent. B.C.

² 2 Kings xviii, 4, 22; xxiii, 48.

own temple, whose revenues would thereby be much increased. But insoluble perplexities are set up as to the alleged movement by the incongruities in the documents. Passing over for the moment the prophets Amos and Hosea and others who ostensibly belong to the eighth century B.C., we find the second priestly reform,¹ consequent on a finding or framing of "the law," represented as occurring early in the reign of Josiah (641-610 B.C.). But later in the same reign are placed the writings of Jeremiah, who constantly contemns the scribes, prophets, and priests in mass, and makes light of the ark,² besides declaring that in Judah³ there are as many Gods as towns, and in Jerusalem as many Baal-altars as streets. The difficulty is reduced by recognising the quasi-historical narrative as a later fabrication; but other difficulties remain as to the prophetic writings; and for our present purpose it is necessary briefly to consider these.

1. The "higher criticism," seeking solid standing-ground at the beginning of the tangible historic period, the eighth century, singles out⁴ the books of Amos and Hosea, setting aside, as dubious in date, Nahum and Joel; and recognising in Isaiah a composite of different periods. If Amos, the "herdsman of Tekoa," could be thus regarded as an indubitable historical person, he would be a remarkable figure in the history of free-thought, as would his nominal contemporary Hosea. Amos is a monotheist, worshipping not a God of Israel but a Yahweh or Elohim of Hosts, called also by the name Adon or Adonai, "the Lord," who rules all the nations and created the universe. Further, the prophet makes Yahweh "hate and despise" the feasts and burnt-offerings and solemn assemblies of his worshippers;⁵ and he meddles impartially with the affairs of the

¹ 2 Kings xxiii.

² Jer. i, 18; iii, 16; vi, 13; vii, 4-22; viii, 8; xviii, 18; xx, 1, 2; xxiii, 11.

³ Jer. ii, 28; xi, 13.

⁴ So Kuenen, vol. i, App. i to Ch. 1.

⁵ Amos v, 21, 22.

kingdoms of Judah and Israel. In the same spirit Hosea menaces the solemn assemblies, and makes Yahweh desire "mercy and not sacrifice."¹ Similar doctrine occurs in the reputedly genuine or ancient parts of Isaiah,² and in Micah.³ Isaiah, too, disparages the Sabbath and solemn meetings, staking all upon righteousness.

2. These utterances, so subversive of the priestly system, are yet held to have been preserved through the ages—through the Assyrian conquest, through the Babylonian Captivity, through the later period of priestly reconstruction—by the priestly system itself. In the state of things pictured under Ezra and Nehemiah, only the zealous adherents of the priestly law can at the outset have had any letters, any literature; it must have been they, then, who treasured the anti-priestly and anti-ritual writings of the prophets—unless, indeed, the latter were preserved by the Jews remaining at Babylon.

3. The perplexity thus set up is greatly deepened when we remember that the period assigned to the earlier prophets is near the beginning of the known age of alphabetic writing,⁴ and before the known age of writing on scrolls. A herdsman of Judea, with a classic and flowing style, is held to have written out his hortatory addresses at a time when such writing is not certainly known to have been practised anywhere else;⁵ and the pre-eminent style of Isaiah is held to belong to the same period.

¹ Hosea ii, 11 ; vi, 6.

² Isa. i, 11–14.

³ Mic. vi, 6–8.

⁴ Cp. M. Müller, *Natural Religion*, pp. 560–1 ; *Psychological Religion*, pp. 30–32 ; Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 465. If the Moabite Stone be genuine—and it is accepted by Stade (*Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, in Oncken's Series, 1881, i, 86) and by most contemporary scholars—the Hebrew alphabetic writing is carried back to the 9th century B.C. An account of the Stone is given in *The Witness of Assyria*, by C. Edwards, ch. xi. See again Mommsen, *History of Rome*, B. i, ch. 14, Eng. trans. 1894, i, 280, for a theory of the extreme antiquity of the alphabet.

⁵ Dr. Cheyne (art. AMOS in *Encyc. Biblica*) gives some good reasons for attaching little weight to such objections, but finally joins in calling Amos "a surprising phenomenon."

“His [Amos’s] language, with three or four insignificant exceptions, is pure, his style classical and refined. His literary power is shown in the regularity of structure which often characterises his periods.....as well as in the ease with which he evidently writes.....Anything of the nature of roughness or rusticity is wholly absent from his writings” (Driver, *Introd. to Lit. of Old Testament*, c. vi, § 3, p. 297, ed. 1891). Isaiah, again, is in his own narrow field one of the most gifted and skilful writers of all antiquity. The difficulty is thus nearly as great as that of the proposition that the Hebrew of the Pentateuch is a thousand years older than that of the latest prophetic books, whose language is substantially the same. (Cp. Andrews Norton, *The Pentateuch*, ed. 1863, pp. 47-48; Renan, *Histoire des langues sémitiques*, 2e édit., p. 118.)

4. The specialist critics, all trained as clergymen, and mostly loth to yield more than is absolutely necessary to skepticism, have surrendered the antiquity claimed for Joel, recognising that the arguments for that are “equally consistent with a date *after* the Captivity.” One of the conclusions here involved is that “Egypt is probably mentioned only as the *typical instance* of a Power hostile to Judah.” Thus, when we remember the later Jewish practice of speaking of Rome as “Babylon,” or “Edom,” allusions by Amos and Hosea to “Assyria” have no evidential force. The same reasoning applies to the supposed ancient portions of Isaiah.

5. Even on the clerical side, among the less conservative critics, it is already conceded that there are late “insertions” in Amos. Some of these insertions are among, or analogous to, the very passages relied on by Kuenen to prove the lofty monotheism of Amos. If these passages, however, suggest a late date, no less do the others disparaging sacrifices. The same critics find interpolations and additions in Hosea. But they offer no proof of the antiquity of what they retain.

The principal passages in Amos given up as insertions by Canon Cheyne, the most perspicacious of the English Hebraists,

¹ Driver, *Introd. to Lit. of Old Testament*, c. vi, § 2 (p. 290, ed. 1891). Cp. Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, i, 86; and Robertson Smith, art. JOEL, in *Encyc. Brit.*

are:—iv, 13; v, 8–9; ix, 5–6; and ix, 8–15. See his introduction to 1895 ed. of Professor Robertson Smith's *Prophets of Israel*, p. xv; and his art. on Amos in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. Compare Kuenen, i, 46, 48. Dr. Cheyne regards as insertions in Hosea the following:—i, 10–ii, 1; “and David their King” in iii, 5; viii, 14; and xiv, 1–9 (as cited, pp. xviii–xix). Obviously these admissions entail others.

6. The same school of criticism, while adhering to the traditional dating of Amos and Hosea, has surrendered the claim for the Psalms, placing most of these in the same age with the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Ecclesiasticus.¹ Now, the sentiment of opposition to burnt-offerings is found in some of the Psalms in language identical with that of the supposed early prophets.² Instead of taking the former for late echoes of the latter, we may reasonably suspect that they belong to the same culture-stage.

The principle is in effect recognised by Canon Cheyne when he writes: “Just as we infer from the reference to Cyrus in xlv, 28, xlv, 1, that the prophecy containing it proceeds from the age of the conqueror, so we may infer from the fraternal feeling towards Egypt and Assyria (Syria) in xix, 23–25, that the epilogue was written when hopes of the union and fusion of Israelitish and non-Israelitish elements first became natural for the Jews—*i.e.*, in the early Jewish period” (*Introd. to the Book of Isaiah*, 1895, pp. 109–110).

7. From the scientific point of view, finally, the element of historical prediction in the prophets is one of the strongest grounds for presuming that they are in reality late documents. In regard to similar predictions in the Gospels (Matt. xxiv, 15; Mark xiii, 2; Luke xxi, 20), rational criticism decides that they were written after the event. No other course can consistently be taken as to early Hebrew predictions of captivity and restoration; and the adherence of many Biblical scholars at this point to the traditional view is psychologically on a par

¹ Cp. Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 501; Driver, c. vii (1st ed. pp. 352 sq., esp. pp. 355, 361, 362, 365); Stade, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, i, 85.

² *E.g.*, Ps. l, 8–15; li, 16–17, where v. 19 is obviously a priestly addition, meant to countervail vv. 16, 17.

with their former refusal to accept a rational estimate of the Pentateuchal narrative.

On some points, such as the flagrant pseudo-prediction in Isaiah xix, 18, all reasonable critics surrender. Thus "König sees rightly that xix, 18, can only refer to Jewish colonies in Egypt, and *refrains from the arbitrary supposition that Isaiah was supernaturally informed* of the future establishment of such colonies" (Cheyne, *Introd. to Smith's Prophets of Israel*, p. xxxiii). But in other cases Dr. Cheyne's own earlier positions appear to involve such an "arbitrary supposition," as do Kuenen's; and Smith explicitly posited it as to the prophets in general. And even as to Isaiah xix, 18, whereas Hitzig, as Havet later, rightly brings the date down to the actual historic time of the establishment of the temple at Heliopolis by Onias (Josephus, *Ant.* xiii, 3, 1; *Wars*, vii, 10, 2), about 160 B.C., Dr. Cheyne (*Introd. to the Book of Isaiah*, p. 108) compromises by dating it about B.C. 275.

The lateness of the bulk of the prophetic writings has been ably argued by Ernest Havet (*Le Christianisme et ses Origines*, vol. iv, 1878, ch. 6; and in the posthumous vol., *La Modernité des Prophètes*, 1891), who supports his case by many cogent reasonings. For instance, besides the argument as to Isa. xix, 18, above noted:—(1) The frequent prediction of the ruin of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar (Isa., ch. xxiii; Jer. xxv, 22; Ezek. xxvi, 7, ch. xxvii), false as to him (a fact which might be construed as a proof of the fallibility of the prophets and the candour of their transcribers), is to be understood in the light of other post-predictions as referring to the actual capture of the city by Alexander. (2) Hosea's prediction of the fall of Judah as well as of Israel, and of their being united, places the passage after the Exile, and may even be held to bring it down to the period of the Asmoneans. So with many other details: the whole argument deserves careful study. M. Havet's views were of course scouted by the conservative specialists, as their predecessors scouted the entire hypothesis of Graf, now taken in its essentials as the basis of sound Biblical criticism. M. Scherer somewhat unintelligently objected to him (*Études sur la litt. contemp.*, vii, 268) that he was not a Hebraist. There is no question of philology involved. It was non-Hebraists who first pointed out the practical incredibility of the central Pentateuchal narrative, on the truth of which Kuenen himself long stood with other Hebraists. (Cp. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, pp. 39, 347; also his (4th) ed. of Bleek's *Einleitung in das alte Testament*, 1878, p. 154; and Kuenen, *Hexateuch*, Eng. trans., pp. xv, 43.) Colenso's argument, in the gist of which he was long preceded by lay freethinkers, was one of simple common

sense. The weak side of M. Havet's case is his undertaking to bring the prophets bodily down to the Maccabean period. This is claiming too much. But his negative argument is not affected by the reply (Darmesteter, *Les Prophètes d'Israël*, 1895, pp. 128-131) to his constructive theory.

It is true that where hardly any documentary datum is intrinsically sure, it is difficult to prove a negative for one more than for another. The historical narratives being systematically tampered with by one writer after another, and even presumptively late writings being interpolated by still later scribes, we can never have demonstrative proof as to the original date of any one prophet. Thus it is arguable that fragments of utterance from eighth-century prophets may have survived orally and been made the nucleus of later documents. This view would be reconcilable with the fact that the prophets Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah are all introduced with some modification of the formula that they prophesied "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah," Jeroboam's name being added in the cases of Hosea and Amos. But that detail is also reconcilable with absolute fabrication. To say nothing of sheer bad faith in a community whose moral code said nothing against fraud save in the form of judicial perjury, the Hebrew literature is profoundly compromised by the simple fact that the religious development of the people made the prestige of antiquity more essential there for the purposes of propaganda than in almost any other society known to us. Hence an all-pervading principle of literary dissimulation; and what freethinking there was had in general to wear the guise of the very force of unreasoning traditionalism to which it was inwardly most opposed. Only thus could new thought find a hearing and secure its preservation at the hands of the tribe of formalists. Even the pessimist Koheleth, wearied with groping science, yet believing nothing of the doctrine of immortality, must needs follow precedent and pose as the fabulous King Solomon, son of the half-mythic David.

§ 3.

We are forced, then, to regard with distrust all passages in the "early" prophets which express either a disregard of sacrifice and ritual, or a universalism incongruous with all that we know of the native culture of their period. The strongest ground for surmising a really "high" development of monotheism in Judah before the Captivity is the stability of the life there as compared with northern Israel.¹ In this respect the conditions might indeed be considered favourable to priestly or other culture; but, on the other hand, the records themselves exhibit a predominant polytheism. The presumption then is strong that the "advanced" passages in the prophets concerning sacrifice belong to an age when such ideas had been reached in more civilised nations, with whose thought travelled Jews could come in contact.

It is true that some such ideas were current in Egypt many centuries before the period under notice—a fact which alone discounts the ethical originality claimed for the Hebrew prophets. *E.g.*, the following passage from the papyrus of Ani, belonging to the Nineteenth Dynasty, not later than 1288 B.C.:—"That which is detestable in the sanctuary of God is noisy feasts; if thou implore him with a loving heart of which all the words are mysterious, he will do thy matters, he hears thy words, he accepts thine offerings" (*Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt*, by W. M. Flinders Petrie, 1898, p. 160). The word "mysterious" here may mean "magical" or "liturgical," or may merely prescribe privacy. But in any case we must look for later culture-contacts as the source of the later Hebrew radicalism under notice, though Egyptian sources are not to be wholly set aside. See Kuenen, i, 395; and Brugsch, as there cited; but cp. Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 440.

It is clear that not only did they accept a cosmogony from the Babylonians, but they were influenced by the lore of the Zoroastrian Persians, with whom, as with the monotheists or pantheists of Babylon, they would have grounds of sympathy. It is an open question whether their special hostility to images does not date from the

¹ Cp. Kuenen, i, 156; Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 139; *Israel*, p. 478.

time of Persian contact.¹ Concerning the restoration, it has been argued that only a few Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem "both under Cyrus and under Dareios"; and that, though the temple was rebuilt under Dareios Hystaspis, the builders were not the *Gola* or returned exiles, but that part of the Judahite population which had not been deported to Babylon.² The problem is obscure;³ but, at least, the separatist spirit of the redacted narratives of Ezra and Nehemiah (which in any case tell of an opposite spirit) is not to be taken as a decisive clue to the character of the new religion. For the rest, the many Jews who remained in Babylon or spread elsewhere in the Persian empire, and who developed their creed on a non-local basis, were bound to be in some way affected by the surrounding theology. And it is tolerably certain that not only was the notion of angels derived by the Jews from either the Babylonians or the Persians, but that their rigid Sabbath and their weekly synagogue meetings came from one or both of these sources.

That the Sabbath was an Akkado-Babylonian and Assyrian institution is now well established (G. Smith, *Assyrian Eponym Canon*, 1875, p. 20; Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 377; Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, p. 76, and in *Variorum Teacher's Bible*, ed. 1885, *Aids*, p. 71). It was before the fact was ascertained that Kuenen wrote of the Sabbath (i, 245) as peculiar to Israel. The Hebrews may have had it before the Exile; but it was clearly not then a great institution; and the mention of Sabbaths in Amos (viii, 5) and Isaiah (i, 13) is one of the reasons for doubting the antiquity of those books. The custom of synagogue meetings on the Sabbath is post-exilic, and may have arisen either in Babylon itself (so Wellhausen,

¹ As to a possible prehistoric connection of Hebrews and Perso-Aryans, see Kuenen, i, 254, discussing Tiele and Spiegel, and iii, 35, 44, treating of Tiele's view, set forth in his *Godsdienst van Zarathustra*, that fire-worship was the original basis of Yahwism. Cp. Land's view, discussed by Kuenen p. 398; and Renan, *Hist. des langues sémit.*, p. 473.

² Cheyne, *Introd. to Isaiah*, Prol. pp. xxx, xxxviii, following Kusters.

³ There is a cognate dispute as to the condition of the Samaritans at the time of the Return. Stade (*Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, i, 602) holds that they were numerous and well-placed. Winckler (*Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen*, 1892, p. 107) argues that, on the contrary, they were poor and unorganised, and looked to the Jews for help. So also E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.*, iii (1901), 214.

Israel, p. 492) or in imitation of Parsee practice (so Tiele, cited by Kuenen, iii, 35). Compare E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, iii (1901), § 131. The same alternative arises with regard to the belief in angels, usually regarded as certainly Persian in origin (cp. Kuenen, iii, 37; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 90; and Sack, *Die altjüdische Religion*, 1889, p. 133). This also could have been Babylonian (Sayce, in *Var. Bible*, as cited, p. 71); even the demon Asmodeus in the Book of Tobit, usually taken as Persian, being of Babylonian derivation (*id.*). Cp. Darmesteter's introd. to *Zendavesta*, 2nd ed., ch. v. On the other hand, the conception of Satan, the Adversary, as seen in 1 Chr. xxi, 1; Zech. iii, 1, 2, seems to come from the Persian Ahriman, though the Satan of Job has not Ahriman's status. Such a modification would come of the wish to insist on the supremacy of the good God. And this quasi-monotheistic view, again, we are led to regard, in the case of the prophets, as a possible Babylonian derivation, or at least as a result of the contact of Yahwists with Babylonian culture. To a foreign influence, finally, must be definitely attributed the later Priestly Code, over-ruling Deuteronomy, lowering the Levites, setting up a high priest, calling the dues into the sanctuary, resting on the Torah the cultus which before was rested on the patriarchs, and providing cities and land for the Aaronidae and the Levites (Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, pp. 123, 127, 147, 149, 347; *Israel*, pp. 495, 497)—the latter an arrangement impossible in mountainous Palestine, as regards the land-measurements (*Id. Proleg.* p. 159, following Gramberg and Graf), and clearly deriving from some such country as Babylonia or Persia. As to the high-priest principle in Babylon and Assyria, see Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 59–61; Jastrow, as cited, p. 658.

Of the general effect of such contacts we have clear traces in two of the most remarkable of the later books of the Old Testament, Job and Ecclesiastes, both of which clearly belong to a late period in religious development. The majority of the critics still confidently describe Job as an original Hebrew work, mainly on the ground, apparently, that it shows no clear marks of translation, though its names and its local colour are all non-Jewish. In any case it represents, for its time, a cosmopolitan culture, and contains the work of more than one hand, the prologue and epilogue being probably older than the rest; while much of the dialogue is obviously late interpolation.

Compare Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, 1887, p. 72 ; Bradley, *Lectures on the Book of Job*, p. 171 ; Bleek-Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, § 268 (291), ed. 1878, p. 542 ; Driver, *Introduction*, pp. 405-8 ; Cornill, *Einleitung in das alte Test.*, 2te Aufl. 1892, §§ 38, 42 ; Sharpe, *History of the Hebrew Nation*, 4th ed., p. 282 sq. ; Dillon, *The Skeptics of the Old Testament*, 1895, pp. 36-39. Renan's dating of the book six or seven centuries before Ecclesiastes (*L'Ecclésiaste*, p. 26 ; *Job*, pp. xv-xliii) is oddly uncritical. It must clearly be dated after Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Dillon, as cited) ; and Cornill even ascribes it to the fourth or third century B.C. Dr. Cheyne notes that in the skeptical passages the name Yahweh is very seldom used (only once or twice, as in xii, 9 ; xxviii, 28) ; and Dr. Driver admits that the whole book not only abounds in Aramaic words, but has a good many "explicable only from the Arabic." Other details in the book suggest the possible culture-influence of the Himyarite Arabs, who had reached a high civilisation before 500 B.C. Dr. Driver's remark that "the thoughts are thoroughly Hebraic" burkes the entire problem as to the manifest innovation the book makes in Hebrew thought and literary method alike. Sharpe (p. 287) is equally arbitrary. Cp. Renan, *Job*, 1859, p. xxv, where the newness of the whole treatment is admitted.

Dr. Dillon (pp. 43-59), following Bickell, has pointed out more or less convincingly the many interpolations made in the book after, and even before, the making of the Septuagint translation, which originally lacked 400 lines of the matter in the present Hebrew version. The discovery of the Saidic version of the LXX text of Job decides the main fact. (See Professor Bickell's *Das Buch Job*, 1894.) "It is quite possible even now to point out, by the help of a few disjointed fragments still preserved, the position, and to divine the sense, of certain spiteful and defiant passages, which, in the interest of 'religion and morals,' were remorselessly suppressed, to indicate others which were split up and transposed, and to distinguish many prolix discourses, feeble or powerful word-pictures, and trite commonplaces, which were deliberately inserted later on, for the sole purpose of toning down the most audacious piece of rationalistic philosophy which has ever yet been clothed in the music of sublime verse" (Dillon, pp. 45-46).

"Besides the four hundred verses which must be excluded on the ground that they are wanting in the Septuagint version, and were therefore added to the text at a comparatively recent period, the long-winded discourse of Elihu must be struck out, most [? much] of which was composed before the book was first translated into Greek.....In the prologue in prose.....

Elihu is not once alluded to ; and in the epilogue, where all the [other] debaters are named and censured, he.....is absolutely ignored.....Elihu's style is *toto cælo* different from that of the other parts of the poem ;.....while his doctrinal peculiarities, particularly his mention of interceding angels, while they coincide with those of the New Testament, are absolutely unknown to Job and his friends.....The confusion introduced into the text by this insertion is bewildering in the extreme ; and yet the result is but a typical specimen of the.....tangle which was produced by the systematic endeavour of later and pious editors to reduce the poem to the proper level of orthodoxy" (*Id.*, pp. 55-57). Again : "Chap. xxiv, 5-8, 10-24, and chap. xxx, 3-7, take the place of Job's blasphemous complaint about the unjust government of the world."

It need hardly be added here that not only the Authorised, but the Revised, Version is false in the text "I know that my redeemer liveth," etc. (xix, 25-27), that being a perversion dating from Jerome. The probable meaning is given in Dr. Dillon's version :—

" But I know that my avenger liveth ;
Though it be at the end upon my dust,
My witness will avenge these things,
And a curse alight upon mine enemies."

The original expressed a complete disbelief in a future life (ch. xiv). Compare Dr. Dillon's rhythmic version of the restored text.

What marks off the book of Job from all other Hebrew literature is its dramatic and reflective handling of the ethical problem of theism, which the prophets either evade or dismiss by declamation against Jewish sins. Not that it is solved in Job, where the *rôle* of Satan is an inconclusive resort to the Persian dualistic solution, and where the deity is finally made to answer Job's free-thinking by sheer literary thunder, much less ratiocinative though far more artistic than the theistic speeches of the friends. But at least the writer or writers of Job's speeches consciously grasped the issue ; and the writer of the epilogue evidently felt that the least Yahweh could do was to compensate a man whom he had allowed to be wantonly persecuted. The various efforts of ancient thought to solve the same problem will be found to constitute the motive power in many later heterodox systems, theistic and atheistic.

Broadly speaking, it is solved in practice in terms of the fortunes of priests and worshippers. At all stages of religious evolution extreme ill-fortune tends to detach men from the cults that have failed to bring them succour. Be it in the case of African indigenes slaying their unsuccessful rain-doctor, Anglo-Saxon priests welcoming Christianity as a surer source of income than their old worship, pagans turning Christian at the fall of Julian, or Christians going over to Islam at the sight of its triumph—the simple primary motive of self-interest is always potent on this as on other sides; and at all stages of Jewish history, it is evident, there were many who held by Yahweh because he prospered them, or renounced him because he did not.

Judaism is thus historically a series of socio-political selections rather than a sequence of hereditary transmission. The first definite and exclusive Yahwistic cult was an outcome of special political conditions; and its priests would adhere to it in adversity in so far as they had no other economic resort. Every return of sunshine, on the other hand, would minister to faith; and while many Jews in the time of Assyro-Babylonian ascendancy decided that Yahweh could not save, those Yahwists who in the actual Captivity prospered commercially in the new life would see in such prosperity a fresh proof of Yahweh's support,¹ and would magnify his name and endow his priests accordingly. For similar reasons, the most intense development of Judaism occurs after the Maccabean revolt, when the military triumph of the racial remnant over its oppressors inspired a new and enduring enthusiasm.

On the other hand, foreign influences would chronically tend to promote doubt, especially where the foreigner was not a mere successful votary exalting his own God, but a sympathetic thinker questioning all the Godisms alike. This consideration is a reason the more for surmising a partly foreign source for the book of Job,

¹ Cp. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, iii, 216.

where there is no thought of one deity being less potent than another, but rather an impeachment of divine rule in terms of a conceptual monotheism. In any case, the book stands for more than Jewish reverie; and where it is finally turned to an irrelevant and commonplace reaffirmation of the goodness of deity, a certain number of sincerer thinkers in all likelihood fell back on an "agnostic" solution of the eternal problem.

In certain aspects the book of Job speaks for a further reach of early freethinking than is seen in Ecclesiastes (Koheleth), which, however, at its lower level of conviction, tells of an unbelief that could not be overborne by any rhetoric. It unquestionably derives from late foreign influences. It is true that even in the book of Malachi, which is commonly dated about 400 B.C., there is angry mention of some who ask, "Where is the God of judgment?" and say, "It is vain to serve God";¹ even as others had said it in the days of Assyrian oppression;² but in Malachi these sentiments are actually associated with foreign influences, and in Koheleth such influences are implicit. By an increasing number of students, though not yet by common critical consent, the book is dated about 200 B.C., when Greek influence was stronger in Jewry than at any previous time.

Grätz even puts it as late as the time of Herod the Great. But compare Dillon, p. 129; Tyler, *Ecclesiastes*, 1874, p. 31; Plumptre's *Ecclesiastes*, 1881, introd., p. 34; Renan, *L'Ecclésiaste*, 1882, pp. 54-59; Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, iii, 82; Driver, *Introduction*, pp. 446-7; Bleek-Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, p. 527. Dr. Cheyne and some others still put the date before 332 B.C. Here again we are dealing with a confused and corrupted text. The German Professor Bickell has framed an ingenious and highly plausible theory to the effect that the present incoherence of the text is mainly due to a misplacing of the leaves of the copy from which the current transcript was made. See it set forth by Dillon, pp. 92-97; cp. Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 273 sq. There has, further, been some tampering.

¹ Mal. ii, 17; iii, 13. Cp. ii, 8, 11.

² Cp. Jer. xxxiii, 24; xxxviii, 19.

The epilogue, in particular, is clearly the addition of a later hand—"one of the most timid and shuffling apologies ever penned" (Dillon, p. 118, *note*).

But the thought of the book is, as Renan says, profoundly fatigued; and the sombre avowals of the absence of divine moral government are ill-balanced by sayings, probably interpolated by other hands, averring an ultimate rectification even on earth. What remains unqualified is the deliberate rejection of the belief in a future life, couched in terms that imply the currency of the doctrine;¹ and the deliberate caution against enthusiasm in religion. Belief in a powerful but remote deity, with a minimum of worship and vows, is the outstanding lesson.²

"To me, Koheleth is not a theist in any vital sense in his philosophic meditations" (Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 250). "Koheleth's pessimistic theory, which has its roots in secularism, is utterly incompatible with the spirit of Judaism.It is grounded upon the rejection of the Messianic expectations, and absolute disbelief in the solemn promises of Jahveh himself.It would be idle to deny that he had far more in common with the 'impious' than with the orthodox" (Dillon, pp. 119-120).

That there was a good deal of this species of tired or stoical semi-rationalism among the Jews of the Hellenistic period may be inferred from various traces. The opening verses of the thirtieth chapter of the book of Proverbs, attributed to AGUR, son of Jakeh, are admittedly the expression of a skeptic's conviction that God cannot be known,³ the countervailing passages being plainly the additions of a believer. Agur's utterances probably belong to the close of the third century B.C. Here, as in Job, there are signs of Arab influence;⁴ but at a later period the main source of

¹ Eccles. iii, 19-21.

² Ch. v. Renan's translation lends lucidity.

³ Driver, *Introduction*, p. 378. Professor Dillon (*Skeptics of the Old Testament*, p. 155) goes so far as to pronounce Agur a "Hebrew Voltaire," which is somewhat of a straining of the few words he has left. Cp. Dr. Moncure Conway, *Solomon and Solomon's Literature*, 1899, p. 55. In any case, Agur belongs to an age of "advanced religious reflection" (Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 152).

⁴ Driver, *Introduction*, p. 378.

skepticism for Israel was probably the Hellenistic civilisation. It is told in the Talmud that in the Maccabean period there came into use the formula, "Cursed be the man that cherisheth swine ; and cursed be the man that teacheth his son the wisdom of the Greeks"; and there is preserved the saying of Rabbi Simeon, son of Gamaliel, that in his father's school five hundred learnt the law, and five hundred the wisdom of the Greeks.¹ Before Gamaliel, the Greek influence had affected Jewish philosophic thought; and it is very probable that among the Sadducees who resisted the doctrine of resurrection there were some thinkers of the Epicurean school. To that school may have belonged the unbelievers who are struck at in several Rabbinical passages which account for the sin of Adam as beginning in a denial of the omnipresence of God, and describe Cain as having said: "There is no judgment; there is no world to come, and there is no reward for the just, and no punishment for the wicked."² But of Greek or other atheism there is no direct trace in the Hebrew literature;³ and the rationalism of the Sadducees, who were substantially the priestly party,⁴ was like the rationalism of the Brahmans and the Egyptian priests—something esoteric and withheld from the multitude. In the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon, which belongs to the first century A.C., the denial of immortality, so explicit in Ecclesiastes, is treated as a proof of utter immorality, though the deniers are not represented as atheists.⁵ They thus seem to have been still numerous,

¹ Biscoe, *History of the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. 1829, p. 80, following Selden and Lightfoot.

² S. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, p. 189, citing *Sanhedrin*, 386, and Pseudo-Jonathan to Gen. iv, 8. Cp. pp. 191-2, citing a mention of Epicurus in the Mishna.

³ The familiar phrase in the Psalms (xiv, i ; liii, 1), "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God," supposing it to be evidence for anything, clearly does not refer to any reasoned unbelief. Atheism could not well be quite so general as the phrase, taken literally, would imply.

⁴ Cp. W. R. Sorley, *Jewish Christians and Judaism*, 1881, p. 9; Robertson Smith, *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, ed. 1892, pp. 48-49. These writers somewhat exaggerate the novelty of the view they accept. Cp. Biscoe, *History of the Acts*, ed. 1829, p. 101.

⁵ *Wisdom*, c. 2.

and the imputation of wholesale immorality to them is of course not to be credited;¹ but there is no trace of any constructive teaching on their part.

So far as the literature shows, save for the confused Judaic-Platonism of Philo of Alexandria, there is practically no rational progress in Jewish thought after Koheleth till the time of contact with revived Greek thought in Saracen Spain. The mass of the people, in the usual way, are found gravitating to the fanatical and the superstitious levels of the current creed. The book of Ruth, written to resist the separatism of the post-Exilic theocracy,² never altered the Jewish practice, though allowed into the canon. The remarkable Levitical legislation providing for the periodical restoration of the land to the poor never came into operation,³ any more than the very different provision giving land and cities to the children of Aaron and the Levites. None of the more rationalistic writings in the canon seems ever to have counted for much in the national life. To conceive of "Israel," in the fashion still prevalent, as being typified in the monotheistic prophets, whatever their date, is as complete a misconception as it would be to see in Mr. Ruskin the expression of the every-day ethic of commercial England. The anti-sacrificial and universalist teachings in the prophets and in the Psalms never affected, for the people at large, the sacrificial and localised worship at Jerusalem; though they may have been esoterically received by some of the priestly or learned class there, and though they may have promoted a continual exodus of the less fanatical types, who turned to other civilisations. Despite the resistance of the Sadducees and the teaching of Job and Ecclesiastes, the belief in a resurrection rapidly gained ground⁴ in the

¹ Cp. the implications in *Ecclesiasticus* vi, 4-6, xvi, 11-12, as to the ethics of many believers.

² Kuenen, ii, 242-3.

³ Kalisch, *Comm. on Leviticus* xxv, 8, Pt. ii, p. 548.

⁴ In the *Wisdom of Solomon*, iii, 13, iv, 1, the old desire for offspring is seen to be in part superseded by the newer belief in personal immortality.

two or three centuries before the rise of Jesuism, and furnished a basis for the new creed; as did the Messianic hope and the belief in a speedy ending of the world, with both of which Jewish fanaticism sustained itself under the long frustration of nationalistic faith before the Maccabean interlude and after the Roman conquest. It was in vain that the great teacher Hillel declared, "There is no Messiah for Israel"; the rest of the race persisted in cherishing the dream.¹ With the major hallucination thus in full possession, the subordinate species of superstition flourished as in Egypt and India; so that at the beginning of our era the Jews were among the most superstitious peoples in the world.² When their monotheism was fully established, and placed on an abstract footing by the destruction of the temple, it seems to have had no bettering influence on the practical ethics of the Gentiles, though it may have furthered the theistic tendency of the Stoic philosophy. Juvenal exhibits to us the Jew proselyte at Rome as refusing to show an unbeliever the way, or guide him to a spring.³ Sectarian monotheism was thus in part on a rather lower ethical and intellectual⁴ plane than the polytheism, to say nothing of the Epicureanism or the Stoicism, of the society of the Roman Empire.

It cannot even be said that the learned Rabbinical class carried on a philosophic tradition, while the indigent multitude thus discredited their creed. In the period after the fall of Jerusalem, the narrow nationalism which had always ruled there seems to have been even intensified. In the Talmud "the most general representation of the Divine Being is as the chief Rabbi of Heaven; the angelic host being his assessors. The heavenly Sanhedrim takes the opinion of living sages in

¹ Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, p. 216. Compare pp. 193-4.

² See *Supernatural Religion*, 6th ed., i, 97-100, 103-121; Mosheim, *Commentaries on Christian Affairs before Constantine*, Vidal's trans., i, 70; Schürer, *Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, Eng. trans., Div. II, vol. iii, p. 152.

³ *Sat.* xiv, 96-106.

⁴ Cp. Horace, *1 Sat.* v, 100.

cases of dispute. Of the twelve hours of the day three are spent by God in study, three in the government of the world (or rather in the exercise of mercy), three in providing food for the world, and three in playing with Leviathan. But since the destruction of Jerusalem all amusements were banished from the courts of heaven, and three hours were employed in the instruction of those who had died in infancy.”¹ So little can a nominal monotheism avail, on the basis of a completed Sacred Book, to keep thought sane when freethought is lacking.

Finally, Judaism played in the world's thought the great reactionary and obscurantist part by erecting into a dogma the irrational conception that its deity made the universe “out of nothing.” At the time of the redaction of the book of Genesis this dogma had not been glimpsed: the Hebrew conception was the Babylonian—that of a pre-existent Chaos put into shape. But gradually, in the interests of monotheism, the anti-scientific doctrine was evolved² by way of negative to that of the Gentiles; and where the great line of Ionian thinkers passed on to the modern world the developed conception of an eternal universe, Judaism passed on through Christianity, as well as in its own “philosophy,” the contrary dogma, to bar the way of later science.

¹ Rev. A. Edersheim, *History of the Jewish Nation after the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 1856, p. 462, citing the *Avoda Sara*, a treatise directed against idolatry! Other Rabbinical views cited by Dr. Edersheim as being in comparison “sublime” are no great improvement on the above—*e.g.*, the conception of deity as “the prototype of the high priest, and the king of kings,” “who created everything for his own glory.” With all this in view, Dr. Edersheim thought it showed “spiritual decadence” in Philo Judæus to speak of Persian magi and Indian gymnosophists in the same laudatory tone as he used of the Essenes, and to attend “heathenish theatrical representations” (p. 372).

² See Ps. xc, 2; Prov. viii, 22, 26.

CHAPTER V.

FREETHOUGHT IN GREECE

THE highest of all the ancient civilisations, that of Greece, was naturally the product of the greatest possible complex of culture-forces;¹ and its rise to pre-eminence begins after the contact of the Greek settlers in Æolia and Ionia with the higher civilisations of Asia Minor.² The great Homeric epos itself stands for the special conditions of Æolic and Ionic life in those colonies;³ even Greek religion, spontaneous as were its earlier growths, was soon influenced by those of the East;⁴ and Greek philosophy and art alike draw their first inspirations from Eastern contact.⁵ Whatever reactions we may make against the tradition of Oriental origins,⁶ it is clear that the higher civilisation of antiquity had Oriental (including in that term Egyptian) roots.⁷ It matters not whether we hold the Phrygians and Karians of history to have been originally an Aryan stock, related to the Hellenes, and thus to have acted as intermediaries between Aryans and Semites, or to have been originally Semites, with whom Greeks

¹ Cp. Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 205, 207, 212.

² Cp. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 533.

³ Cp. K. O. Müller, *Literature of Ancient Greece*, ed. 1847, p. 77.

⁴ Duncker, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, 2 Aufl. iii, 209-210, 252-4, 319 sq. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 181, 365, 369, 377, 380, 535. (See also ii, 100, 102, 105, 106, 115, *note*, etc.; W. Christ, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, 3te Aufl. p. 12; Gruppe, *Die griechischen Culte und Mythen*, 1887, p. 165 sq.)

⁵ E. Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, 1858, i, 28, 29, 35, 40, 41, 101, 203, etc.; Meyer, ii, 369.

⁶ See the able and learned essay of M. Reinach, *Le Mirage Orientale*, reprinted from *L'Anthropologie*, 1893. I do not find that its arguments affect any of the positions here taken up. See pp. 40-41.

⁷ Meyer, ii, 369.

intermingled.¹ On either view, the intermediaries represented Semitic influences, which they passed on to the Greek-speaking races, though they in turn developed its deities in large part on psychological lines common to them and the Semites.²

As to the obvious Asiatic influences on Greek civilisation, compare Winwood Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man*, 1872, p. 64; Von Ihering, *Vorgeschichte der Indo-Europäer*, Eng. trans. ("The Evolution of the Aryan"), p. 73; Schömann, *Griechische Alterthümer*, 2te Aufl., 1861, i, 10; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 155; A. Bertrand, *Études de mythologie et d'archéologie grecques*, 1858, pp. 40-41. It seems clear that the Egyptian influence is greatly overstated by Herodotos (ii, 49-52, etc.), who indeed avows that he is but repeating what the Egyptians affirm. The Egyptian priests made their claim in the spirit in which the Jews later made theirs. Herodotos, besides, would prefer an Egyptian to an Asiatic derivation, and so would his audience.

A Hellenistic enthusiasm has led a series of eminent scholars to carry so far their resistance to the tradition of Oriental beginnings³ as to take up the position that Greek thought is "autochthonous."⁴ If it were, it could not conceivably have progressed as it did. Only the tenacious psychological prejudice as to race-characters and racial "genius" could thus long detain so many students at a point of view so much more nearly related to supernaturalism than to science. It is safe to say that if any people is ever seen to progress in thought, art, and life, with measurable rapidity, its progress is due to

¹ Cp. K. O. Müller, *History of the Doric Race*, Eng. trans., 1830, i, 8-10; Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte*, 1885, i, 33; Grote, *History of Greece*, 10-vol. ed., 1888, iii, 3-5, 35-44; Duncker, iii, 136, n.; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 299-310 (§§ 250-258); E. Curtius, i, 29; Schömann, *Griechische Alterthümer*, as cited, i, 2-3, 89.

² Cp. Meyer, ii, 97; and his article "BAAL" in Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon Mythol.*, i, 2867.

³ The fallacy of this tradition, as commonly put, was well shown by Renouvier long ago—*Manuel de philosophie ancienne*, 1844, i, 3-13. Cp. Ritter as cited below.

⁴ Cp. on one side, Ritter, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, Eng. trans., i, 151; Renan, *Études d'histoire religieuse*, pp. 47-48; Zeller, *History of Greek Philosophy*, Eng. trans., 1881, i, 43-49; and on the other Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philos.*, Eng. trans., i, 31, and the weighty criticism of Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 126-7 (Eng. trans., i, 9, note 5).

the reactions of foreign intercourse. The primary civilisations, or what pass for such, as those of Akkad and Egypt, are immeasurably slow in accumulating culture-material; the relatively rapid developments always involve the stimulus of old cultures upon a new and vigorous civilisation, well-placed for social evolution for the time being. There is no point in early Greek evolution, so far as we have documentary trace of it, at which foreign impact or stimulus is not either patent or inferrible.¹ In the very dawn of history, the Greeks are found to be a composite stock, growing still more composite; and the very beginnings of its higher culture are traced to the non-Grecian people of Thrace,² who worshipped the Muses. The later supremacy of the Greek culture is thus to be explained in terms not of an abnormal "Greek genius,"³ but of the special evolution of intelligence in the Greek-speaking stock, firstly through constant crossing with others, and secondarily through its furtherance by the special social conditions of the more progressive Greek city-states, of which conditions the most important were their geographical dividedness, and their own consequent competition and interaction.

§ 1.

By the tacit admission of one of the ablest opponents of the theory of foreign influence, Hellenic religion as fixed by Homer for the Hellenic world was partly determined by Asiatic influences. Ottfried Müller decided not only that Homer the man (in whose personality he believed) was probably a Smyranean, whether of Æolic or

¹ Cp. Curtius, i, 125.

² As to the primary mixture of "Pelasgians" and Hellenes, cp. Busolt, i, 27-32; Curtius, i, 27; Schömann, i, 3-4; Thirlwall, *History of Greece*, ed. 1839, i, 51-2, 116. K. O. Müller (*Doric Race*, Eng. trans., i, 10) and Thirlwall, who follows him (i, 45-47), decide that the Thracians cannot have been very different from the Hellenes in dialect, else they could not have influenced the latter as they did. This position is clearly untenable, whatever may have been the ethnological facts. It would entirely negate the possibility of reaction between Greeks, Kelts, Egyptians, Semites, Romans, Persians, and Hindus.

³ Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.*, ii, 583.

Ionic stock,¹ but that Homer's religion must have represented a special selection from the manifold Greek mythology, necessarily representing his local bias.² Now, the Greek cults at Smyrna, as in the other Æolic and Ionic cities of Asia Minor, would be very likely to reflect in some degree the influence of the Karian or other Asiatic cults around them.³ The early Attic conquerors of Miletos allowed the worship of the Karian Sun-God there to be carried on by the old priests; and the Attic settlers of Ephesos in the same way adopted the neighbouring worship of the Lydian Goddess (who became the Artemis or "Great Diana" of the Ephesians), and retained the ministry of the attendant priests and eunuchs.⁴ Smyrna was apparently not like these a mixed community, but one founded by Achaians from the Peloponnesos; but the general Ionic and Æolic religious atmosphere, set up by common sacrifices,⁵ must have been represented in an epic brought forth in that region. The Karian civilisation had at one time spread over a great part of the Ægean, including Delos and Cyprus.⁶ Such a civilisation must have affected that of the Greek conquerors, who only on that basis became civilised traders.⁷

It is not necessary to ask how far exactly the influence may have gone in the *Iliad*: the main point is that even at that stage of comparatively naïf Hellenism the Asiatic environment, Karian or Phœnician, counted for something, whether in cosmogony or in furthering the process

¹ *Lit. of Anc. Greece*, pp. 41-47. The discussion of the Homeric problem is of course alien to the present inquiry.

² *Introduction to Scientific Mythology*, Eng. trans., pp. 180, 181, 291. Cp. Curtius, i, 126.

³ Cp. Curtius, i, 107, as to the absence in Homer of any distinction between Greeks and barbarians; and Grote, 10-vol. ed., 1888, iii, 37-8, as to the same feature in Archilochos.

⁴ Duncker, *Gesch. des Alt.*, as cited, iii, 209-210; p. 257, 319 sq. Cp. K. O. Müller, as last cited, pp. 181, 193; Curtius, i, 43-49, 53, 54, 107, 365, 373, 377, etc.; Grote, iii, 39-41; and Meyer, ii, 104.

⁵ Duncker, iii, 214; Curtius, i, 155, 121; Grote, iii, 279-280.

⁶ Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte*, 1885, i, 171-2. Cp. pp. 32-34; and Curtius, i, 42.

⁷ On the general question cp. Gruppe, *Die griechischen Culte und Mythen*, pp. 151 ff., 157, 158 ff., 656 ff., 672 ff.

of God-grouping, or in conveying the cult of Cyprian Aphrodite,¹ or haply in lending some characteristics to Zeus and Apollo and Athênê,² an influence none the less real because the genius of the poet or poets of the Iliad has given to the whole Olympian group the artistic stamp of individuality which thenceforth distinguishes the Gods of Greece from all others. Indeed the very creation of a graded hierarchy out of the independent local deities of Greece, the marrying of the once isolated Pelasgic Hêrê to Zeus, the subordination to him of the once isolated Athênê and Apollo—all this tells of the influence of a Semitic world in which each Baal had his wife, and in which the monarchic system developed on earth had been set up in heaven.³ But soon the Asiatic influence becomes still more clearly recognisable. There is reason to hold with Schrader that the belief in a blissful future state, as seen even in the Odyssey⁴ and in Hesiod, is “a new belief which is only to be understood in view of oriental tales and teaching.”⁵ In Hesiod, again, the Semitic element increases,⁶ Kronos for instance being a Semitic figure;⁷ while Semelê, if not Dionysos, appears to be no less so.⁸ But we may further surmise that in

¹ Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, 2 Aufl. i, 260; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 211; R. Brown, Jr., *Semitic Influence in Hellenic Mythology*, 1898, p. 130; Professor G. Murray, *Hist. of Anc. Greek Lit.*, p. 35.

² See Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 210, 212. Cp., again, Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, i, 95, as to the probability that the “twelve Gods” were adjusted to the confederations of twelve cities, and again p. 126.

³ “Even the title ‘king’ (Ἀναξ) seems to have been borrowed by the Greek from Phrygian.....It is expressly recorded that *τύραννος* is a Lydian word. *Βασιλεύς* (‘king’) resists all attempts to explain it as a purely Greek formation, and the termination assimilates it to certain Phrygian words.” (Professor W. M. Ramsay, in *Encyc. Brit.*, art. PHRYGIA). In this connection note the number of names containing *Anax* (Anaximenes, Anaximandros, Anaxagoras, etc.) among the Ionian Greeks.

⁴ iv, 561 sq.

⁵ *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples*, Eng. trans., p. 423. Wilamowitz holds that the verses *Od.* xi, 566–631, are interpolations made later than 600 B.C.

⁶ Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 209; Preller, p. 263.

⁷ Meyer says on the contrary (*Gesch. des Alt.*, ii, 103, Anm.) that “Kronos is certainly a Greek figure”; but he cannot be supposed to dispute that the Greek Kronos cult is grafted on a Semitic one.

⁸ Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 54, 181. Cp. Cox, *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, p. 260, note. It has not however been noted in the discussions on Semelê that *Semlje* is the Slavic name for the Earth as Goddess. Ranke, *History of Servia*, Eng. trans., p. 43.

Homer, to begin with, the conception of Okeanos, the earth-surrounding Ocean-stream, as the origin of all things,¹ comes from some Semitic source; and that Hesiod's more complicated scheme of origins from Chaos is a further borrowing of oriental thought—both notions being found in ancient Babylonian lore, whence the Hebrews derived their combination of Chaos and Ocean in the first verses of Genesis.² It thus appears that the earlier oriental³ influence upon Greek thought was in the direction of developing religion,⁴ with only the germ of rationalism conveyed in the idea of an existence of matter before the Gods,⁵ which we shall later find scientifically developed. But the case is obscure. Insofar as Hesiod, for instance, partly moralises the more primitively savage myths,⁶ it may be that he represents the spontaneous need of the more highly evolved race to give an acceptable meaning to divine tales which, coming from another race, have not a quite sacrosanct prescription, though the tendency is to accept them. On the other hand, it may have been a further foreign influence that gave the critical impulse.

“ It is plain enough that Homer and Hesiod represent, both theologically and socially, the *close* of a long epoch, and not the youth of the Greek world, as some have supposed. The real signification of many myths is lost to them, and so is the import of most of the names and titles of the elder gods, which are archaic and strange, while the subordinate personages

¹ *Iliad*, xiv. 201, 302.

² Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, p. 367 sq.; *Ancient Empires*, p. 158. Note p. 387 in the Lectures as to the Assyrian influence, and p. 391 as to the Homeric notion in particular. Cp. W. Christ, *Gesch. der griechischen Literatur*, § 68.

³ It is unnecessary to examine here the view of Herodotos that many of the Greek cults were borrowed from Egypt. Herodotos reasoned from analogies, with no exact historical knowledge. But cp. Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 67, as to probable Egyptian influence.

⁴ Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, ii, §§ 453-460, as to the eastern initiative of the Orphic theology.

⁵ It is noteworthy that the traditional doctrine associated with the name of Orpheus included a similar materialistic theory of the beginning of things. Athenagoras, *Apol.* c. 19. Cp. Renouvier, *Manuel de philos. ancienne*, i, 69-72; and Meyer, ii, 743.

⁶ Cp. Meyer, ii, 726. As to the oriental elements in Hesiod see further Gruppe, *Die griechischen Culte und Mythen*, 1887, pp. 577, 587, 589, 593.

generally have purely Greek names" (Professor Mahaffy, *History of Classical Greek Literature*, 1880, i, 17).

§ 2.

Whatever be the determining conditions, it is clear that the Homeric epos stands for a new growth of secular song, distinct from the earlier poetry, which by tradition was "either lyrical or oracular." The poems ascribed to the pre-Homeric bards "were all short, and they were all strictly religious. In these features they contrasted broadly with the epic school of Homer. Even the hexameter metre seems not to have been used in these old hymns, and was called a new invention of the Delphic priests. Still further, the majority of these hymns are connected with mysteries apparently ignored by Homer, or with the worship of Dionysus, which he hardly knew."¹ Intermediate between the earlier religious poetry and the Homeric epic, then, was a hexametric verse, used by the Delphic priesthood; and to this order of poetry belongs the *Theogony* of Hesiod, which is a sample of other and older works,² probably composed by priests. And the distinctive mark of the Homeric epos is that, framed as it was to entertain feudal chiefs and their courts, it turned completely away from the sacerdotal norm and purpose. "Thus epic poetry, from having been purely religious, became purely secular. After having treated men and heroes in subordination to the Gods, it came to treat the Gods in relation to men. Indeed it may be said of Homer, that in the image of man created he God."³

As to the non-religiousness of the Homeric epics, there is a fairly general critical consensus. Meyer insists (*Gesch. des Alt.* ii, 395) that, as contrasted with the earlier religious poetry, "the epic poetry is throughout secular (*profan*); it aims at charming its hearers, not at propitiating the Gods"; and he

¹ Mahaffy, *History of Classical Greek Literature*, 1880, i, 15.

² *Id.* p. 16. Cp. W. Christ, as cited, p. 79.

³ *Id.* pp. 16-17.

further sees in the whole Ionian mood a certain cynical disillusionment (*Id.*, ii, 723). E. Curtius (*G. G.* i, 126) goes so far as to ascribe a certain irony to the portraiture of the Gods (Ionian Apollo excepted) in Homer, and to trace this to Ionian levity. To the same cause he assigns the lack of any expression of a sense of stigma attaching to murder. This sense he holds the Greek people had, though Homer does not hint it. (Cp. Grote, i, 24, whose inference Curtius implicitly impugns.) On the general question of the mood of the Homeric poems compare Professor Gilbert Murray, *History of Ancient Greek Literature*, pp. 34, 35; and A. Benn, *The Philosophy of Greece in Relation to the Character of its People*, 1898, pp. 39-30. Girard (*Le Sentiment religieux en Grèce*, 1869) appears to have no suspicion of any problem to solve, treating Homer as unaffectedly religious.

Still, it cannot be said that in the *Iliad* there is any hint of religious skepticism, though the Gods are so wholly in the likeness of men that the lower deities fight with heroes and are worsted. In the *Odyssey* there is a bare hint of possible speculation in the use of the word *atheos*; but it is applied only in the phrase οὐκ ἄθεός, "not without a God,"¹ in the sense of similar expressions in other passages and in the *Iliad*.² The idea was that sometimes the Gods directly meddled. When Odysseus accuses the suitors of not dreading the Gods,³ he has no thought of accusing them of unbelief.⁴ Homer has indeed been supposed to have exercised a measure of relative freethought in excluding from his song the more offensive myths about the Gods,⁵ but such exclusion may be sufficiently explained on the score that the epopees were chanted in aristocratic

¹ *Od.* xviii, 352.

² *Od.* vi, 240; *Il.* v, 185.

³ *Od.* xxii, 39.

⁴ In *Od.* xiv, 18, ἀντιθεοί means not "opposed to the Gods" but "god-like," in the ordinary Homeric sense of noble-looking or richly attired, as men in the presence of the Gods. Cp. vi, 241. Yet a Scholiast on a former passage took it in the sense of God-opposing. Clarke's ed. *in loc.* Liddell and Scott give no use of ἄθεος, in the sense of denying the Gods, before Plato (*Apol.* 26 C, etc.), or in the sense of ungodly before Pindar (*P.* iv, 288) and Æschylus (*Eumen.* 151). But already before Plato we find the terms ἀπίστος and ἄθεος, "faithless" or "infidel" and "atheist," used as terms of moral aspersion, quite in the Christian manner (Euripides, *Helena*, 1147), where there is no question of incredulity.

⁵ Cp. Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, 2nd ed., i, 14-15, and cit. there from Professor Jebb.

dwelling, before womenkind, without surmising any process of doubt on the poet's part.

On the other hand, it was inevitable that such a free treatment of things hitherto sacred should not only affect the attitude of the lay listener towards the current religion, but should re-act on the religious consciousness. God-legends so fully thrust on secular attention were bound to be discussed; and in the adaptations of myth for liturgical purposes by STESICHOROS (fl. circa 600 B.C.) we appear to have the first open trace of a critical revolt in the Greek world against immoral or undignified myths.¹ In his work, it is fair to say, we see "the beginning of rationalism": "the decisive step is taken: once the understanding criticises the sanctified tradition, it raises itself to be the judge thereof: no longer the common tradition but the individual conviction is the ground of religious belief."² Religious, indeed, the process still substantially is. It is to preserve the credit of Helena as a Goddess that Stesichoros repudiates the Homeric account of her,³ somewhat in the spirit in which Hesiod manipulated the myths without rejecting them, or the Hebrew redactors tampered with their text. But in Stesichoros there is a new tendency to reject the myth altogether;⁴ so that at this stage freethought is still part of a process in which religious feeling, pressed by an advancing ethical consciousness, instinctively clears its standing ground.

It is in Pindar, however (B.C. 518-442), that we first find such a mental process plainly avowed by a believer.

¹ Cp. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 724-7; Grote, as cited, i, 279-281.

² Meyer, ii, 724, 727.

³ The tradition is confused. Stesichoros is said first to have aspersed Helen, whereupon she, as Goddess, struck him with blindness: thereafter he published a retractation, in which he declared that she had never been at Troy, an *eidolon* or phantasm taking her name; and on this his sight was restored. We can but divine through the legend the probable reality, the documents being lost. See Grote, as cited, for the details. For the eulogies of Stesichoros by ancient writers, see Girard, *Sentiment religieux en Grèce*, 1869, pp. 175-9.

⁴ Cp. Meyer (1901), iii, § 244.

In his first Olympic Ode he expressly declares the need for bringing afterthought to bear on poetic lore, that so men may speak nought unfitting of the Gods; and he protests that he will never tell the tale of the blessed ones banqueting on human flesh.¹ In the ninth Ode he again protests that his lips must not speak blasphemously of such a thing as strife among the immortals.² Here the critical motive is ethical, though, while repudiating one kind of scandal about the Gods, Pindar placidly accepts others no less startling to the modern sense. His critical revolt, in fact, is far from thoroughgoing, and suggests rather a religious man's partial response to pressure from others than any independent process of reflection.

“He [Pindar] was honestly attached to the national religion and to its varieties in old local cults. He lived a somewhat sacerdotal life, labouring in honour of the Gods, and seeking to spread a reverence for old traditional beliefs. He moreover shows an acquaintance with Orphic rites and Pythagorean mysteries, which led him to preach the doctrine of immortality, and of rewards and punishments in the life hereafter. [Note.—The most explicit fragment (*θρήνοι*, 3) is, however, not considered genuine by recent critics.].....He is indeed more affected by the advance of freethinking than he imagines; he borrows from the neologians the habit of rationalising myths, and explaining away immoral acts and motives in the Gods; but these things are isolated attempts with him, and have no deep effect upon his general thinking” (Mahaffy, *History of Greek Literature*, i, 213–214).

For such a development we are not, of course, forced to assume a foreign influence: mere progress in refinement and in mental activity could bring it about; yet none the less it is probable that foreign influence did quicken the process. The period of Pindar and Æschylus follows on one in which Greek thought, stimulated on all sides, had taken the first great stride in its advance beyond all antiquity. Egypt had been fully thrown open to the Greeks in the reign of

¹ *Ol.* i, 42–57, 80–85.

² *Ol.* ix, 54–61.

Psammetichus¹ (B.C. 650); and a great historian who contends that the "sheer inherent and expansive force" of "the" Greek intellect, "aided but by no means either impressed or provoked from without," was the true cause, yet concedes that intercourse with Egypt "enlarged the range of their thoughts and observations, while it also imparted to them that vein of mysticism which overgrew the primitive simplicity of the Homeric religion," and that from Asia Minor in turn they had derived "musical instruments and new laws of rhythm and melody," as well as "violent and maddening religious rites."² And others making similar *à priori* claims for the Greek intelligence are forced likewise to admit that the mental transition between Homer and Herodotos cannot be explained save in terms of "the influence of other creeds, and the necessary operation of altered circumstances and relations."³ In the *Persae* of Æschylus we even catch a glimpse of direct contact with foreign skepticism,⁴ though in the poet's own thought there has occurred only an ethical judgment of the older creeds, an approach to pantheism, a rejection of anthropomorphism, and a growth of pessimism that tells of their final insufficiency.

The leaning to pantheism is established by the discovery that the disputed lines, "Zeus is sky, earth, and heaven: Zeus is all things, yea, greater than all things," belonged to the lost tragedy of the *Heliades* (Haigh, *Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, 1896, p. 88). For the pessimism see the *Prometheus*, 247-251. The anti-anthropomorphism is further to be made out from the lines ascribed to Æschylus by Justin Martyr (*De Monarchia*, c. 2) and Clemens Alexandrinus (*Stromata*, v, 14). They are expressly pantheistic; but their genuineness is doubtful. The

¹ A ruler of Libyan stock, and so led by old Libyan connections to make friends with Greeks. He reigned over fifty years, and the Greek connection grew very close. Curtius i, 344-5. Cp. Grote, i, 144-155.

² Grote, 10-vol. ed., 1888, i, 307, 326, 329, 413. Cp. i, 27-30; ii, 52; iii, 39-41, etc.

³ K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Mythology*, p. 192.

⁴ "Then one [of the Persians] who before had in nowise believed in [or, recognised the existence of] the Gods, offered prayer and supplication, doing obeisance to Earth and Heaven" (*Persae*, 497-9).

story that Æschylus was nearly killed by a theatre audience on the score that he had divulged part of the mysteries in a tragedy (Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, 1889, p. 316; *Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, 1898, pp. 49–50) does not seem to have suggested to Aristotle, who tells it (*Nicomachean Ethics*, iii, 2), any heterodox intention on the tragedian's part; but it is hard to see an orthodox believer in the author of the *Prometheus*, wherein Zeus is posed as brutal might crucifying innocence and beneficence. Cp. Haigh, *Tragic Drama*, p. 86 sq. "Some critics," says Mr. Haigh (p. 88), "have been led to imagine that there is in Æschylus a double Zeus—the ordinary God of the polytheistic religion and the one omnipotent deity in whom he really believed. They suppose that he had no genuine faith in the credibility of the popular legends, but merely used them as a setting for his tragedies; and that his own convictions were of a more philosophical type," as seen in the pantheistic lines concerning Zeus. To this Mr. Haigh replies that it is "most improbable that there was any clear distinction in the mind of Æschylus" between the two conceptions of Zeus; going on, however, to admit that "much, no doubt, he regarded as uncertain, much as false. Even the name 'Zeus' was to him a mere convention." Mr. Haigh in this discussion does not attempt to deal with the problem of the *Prometheus*.

The hesitations of the critics on this head are noteworthy. Karl Ottfried Müller, who is least himself in dealing with fundamental issues of creed, evades the problem (*Lit. of Anc. Greece*, 1847, p. 329) with the bald suggestion that "Æschylus, in his own mind, must have felt how this severity [of Zeus], a necessary accompaniment of the transition from the Titanic period to the government of the Gods of Olympus, was to be reconciled with the mild wisdom which he makes an attribute of Zeus in the subsequent ages of the world. Consequently, the deviation from right.....would all lie on the side of Prometheus." This nugatory plea—which is rightly rejected by Burckhardt (*Griechische Culturgeschichte*, ii, 25)—is ineffectually backed by the argument that the friendly Oceanides recur to the thought, "Those only are wise who humbly reverence Adrasteia (*Fate*)"—as if the positing of a supreme Fate were not a further belittlement of Zeus.

Other critics are similarly evasive. Patin (*Eschyle*, éd. 1877, p. 250 sq.), noting the vagaries of past criticism, hostile and other, avowedly leaves the play an unsolved enigma, affirming only the commonly asserted "piety" of Æschylus. Girard (*Le sentiment religieux en Grèce*, 1869, pp. 425–9) does no better, while dogmatically asserting that the poet is "the Greek

faithful to the faith of his fathers, which he interprets with an intelligent and emotional (*émue*) veneration." Meyer (iii, §§ 257-8) draws an elaborate parallel between Æschylus and Pindar, affirming in turn the "tiefe Frömmigkeit" of the former—and in turn leaves the enigma of the *Prometheus* unsolved.

Professor Mahaffy, with his more vivacious habit of thought, comes to the evaded issue. "How," he asks, "did the Athenian audience, who vehemently attacked the poet for divulging the mysteries, tolerate such a drama? And still more, how did Æschylus, a pious and serious thinker, venture to bring such a subject on the stage with a moral purpose?" The answers suggested are: (1) that in all old religions there are tolerated anomalous survivals; (2) that "a very extreme distortion of their Gods will not offend many who would feel outraged at any open denial of them"; (3) that all Greeks longed for despotic power for themselves, and that "no Athenian, however he sympathised with Prometheus, would think of blaming Zeus for.....crushing all resistance to his will." But even if these answers—of which the last is the most questionable—be accepted, "the question of the poet's intention is far more difficult, and will probably never be satisfactorily answered." Finally, we have this summing-up: "Æschylus was, indeed, essentially a theologian.....but, what is more honourable and exceptional, he was so candid and honest a theologian that he did not approach men's difficulties for the purpose of refuting them or showing them weak and groundless. On the contrary, though an orthodox and pious man, though clearly convinced of the goodness of Providence, and of the profound truth of the religion of his fathers, he was ever stating boldly the contradictions and anomalies in morals and in myths, and thus naturally incurring the odium and suspicion of the professional advocates of religion and their followers. He felt, perhaps instinctively, that a vivid dramatic statement of these problems in his tragedies was better moral education than vapid platitudes about our ignorance, and about our difficulties being only caused by the shortness of our sight" (*History of Greek Literature*, i, 260-1, 273-4).

Here, despite the intelligent handling, the enigma is merely transferred from the great tragedian's work to his character: it is not solved. It seems finally permissible, then, to suggest that his "piety" was either discontinuous or a matter of artistic rhetoric and public spirit, and that the *Prometheus* is a work of profound and terrible irony, unburdening his mind of reveries that religion could not conjure away. The discussion

on the play has unduly ignored the question of its date. It is, in all probability, one of the latest of the works of Æschylus (K. O. Müller, *Lit. of Anc. Greece*, p. 327; Haigh, *Tragic Drama*, p. 109). Müller points to the employment of the third actor—a late development—and Haigh to the overshadowing of the choruses by the dialogue; also to the mention (ll. 366–372) of the eruption of Etna, which occurred in 475 B.C.). This one circumstance goes far to solve the dispute. Coming towards the end of his life, the play belongs to the latest stages of his thinking; and if it departs widely in its tone from the earlier plays, the reasonable inference is that his ideas had undergone a change. Rationalism, indeed, does not usually emerge in old age, though Voltaire was deeply shaken in his theism by the earthquake of Lisbon; but Æschylus is unique even among men of genius; and the highest flight of Greek drama may well stand for an abnormal intellectual experience.

In this primary entrance of critical doubt into drama we have one of the sociological clues to the whole evolution of Greek thought. It has been truly said that the constant action of the tragic stage, the dramatic putting of arguments and rejoinders, *pros* and *cons*—which in turn was a fruit of the actual daily pleadings in the Athenian dikastery—was a manifold stimulus alike to ethical feeling and to intellectual effort, such as no other ancient civilisation ever knew. “The appropriate subject-matter of tragedy is pregnant not only with ethical sympathy, but also with ethical debate and speculation,” to an extent unapproached in the earlier lyric and gnomic poetry and the literature of aphorism and precept. “In place of unexpanded results, or the mere communication of single-minded sentiment, we have even in Æschylus, the earliest of the great tragedians, a large latitude of dissent and debate—a shifting point of view—a case better or worse—and a divination of the future advent of sovereign and instructed reason. It was through the intermediate stage of tragedy that Grecian literature passed into the Rhetoric, Dialectics, and Ethical speculation which marked the fifth century B.C.”¹

¹ Grote, ed. 1888, vii, 8–21. See the whole exposition of the exceptionally interesting 67th chapter.

This development was indeed autochthonous, save in so far as the crude germ of the tragic drama came from the East in the cult of Dionysos, with its vinous dithyramb: the "Greek intellect" assuredly did wonderful things at Athens, being placed, for a time, in civic conditions peculiarly fitted for the economic evocation of certain forms of genius. But the above-noted developments in Pindar and in Æschylus had been preceded by the great florescence of early Ionian philosophy in the sixth century, a growth which constrains us to look once more to Asia Minor for a vital fructification of the Greek inner life, of a kind that Athenian institutions could not in themselves evoke. For while drama flourished supremely at Athens, science and philosophy grew up elsewhere, centuries before Athens had a philosopher of note; and all the notable beginnings of Hellenic freethought occurred outside of Hellas proper.

§ 3.

The Greeks varied from the general type of culture-evolution seen in India, Persia, Egypt, and Babylon, and approximated somewhat to that of ancient China, in that their higher thinking was done not by an order of priests pledged to cults, but by independent laymen. In Greece, as in China, this line of development is to be understood as a result of early political conditions—in China, those of a multiplicity of independent feudal States; in Greece, those of a multiplicity of City States, set up first by the geographical structure of Hellas, and reproduced in the colonies of Asia Minor and Magna Graecia by reason of the acquired ideal and the normal state of commercial competition. To the last, many Greek cults exhibited their original character as the *sacra* of private families. Such conditions prevented the growth of a priestly caste or organisation.¹ Neither

¹ Cp. Meyer, ii, 431; K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Mythology*, pp. 189-192; Duncker, p. 340; Curtius, i, 384; Thirlwall, i, 200-203; Burckhardt, *Griechische Culturgeschichte*, 1898, ii, 19. As to the ancient beginnings

China nor Pagan Greece was imperialised till there had arisen enough of rationalism to prevent the rise of a powerful priesthood; and the later growth of a priestly system in Greece in the Christian period is to be explained in terms first of a positive social degeneration, accompanying a complete transmutation of political life, and secondly of the imposition of a new cult, on the popular plane, specially organised on the model of the political system that adopted it. Under imperialism, however, the two civilisations ultimately presented a singular parallel of unprogressiveness.

In the great progressive period, the possible gains from the absence of a priesthood are seen in course of realisation. For the Greek-speaking world in general there was no dogmatic body of teaching, no written code of theology and moral law, no Sacred Book.¹ Each local cult had its own ancient ritual, often ministered by priestesses, with myths, often of late invention, to explain it;² only Homer and Hesiod, with perhaps some of the now lost epics, serving as a general treasury of myth-lore. The two great epopees ascribed to Homer, indeed, had a certain Biblical status; and the Homerids or other bards who recited them did what in them lay to

of a priestly organisation, see Curtius, i, 92-94, 97. As to the effects of its absence, see Heeren, *Polit. Hist. of Anc. Greece*, Eng. trans., 1829, pp. 59-63; Burckhardt, as cited, ii, 31-32; Meyer, as last cited; Zeller, *Philos. der Griechen*, 3te Aufl., i, 44 sq. Lange's criticism of Zeller's statement (*Gesch. des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl., i, 124-6, note 2) practically concedes the proposition. The influence of a few influential priestly families is not denied. The point is that they remained isolated.

¹ Cp. K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Mythol.*, p. 195; Curtius, i, 387, 389, 392; Duncker, iii, 519-521, 563; Thirlwall, i, 204; Barthélemy St. Hilaire, préf. to trans. of *Metaphys.* of Aristotle, p. 14. Professor Gilbert Murray, noting that Homer and Hesiod treated the Gods as elements of romance, or as facts to be catalogued, asks: "Where is the literature of religion: the literature which treated the Gods as Gods? It must," he adds, "have existed"; and he holds that we "can see that the religious writings were both early and multitudinous" (*Hist. of Anc. Greek Lit.*, p. 62; cp. Meyer and Mahaffy as cited above, pp. 127-8. "Writings" is not here to be taken literally: the early hymns were unwritten). The priestly hymns and oracles and mystery-rituals in question were never collected; but perhaps we may form some idea of their nature from the "Homeridian" and Orphic hymns to the Gods, and those of the Alexandrian antiquary Callimachus.

² Meyer, ii, 426; Curtius, i, 390-1, 417; Thirlwall, 204; Grote, i, 48-49.

make the old poetry the standard of theological opinion; but they too lacked organised influence, and could not hinder higher thinking.¹ The special priesthood of Delphi, wielding the oracle, could maintain their political influence only by holding their function above all apparent self-seeking or effort at domination.² It only needed, then, such civic conditions as should evolve a leisured class, with a lead towards study, to make possible a growth of lay philosophy.

Those conditions first arose in the Ionian cities; because there first did Greek citizens attain commercial wealth,³ as a result of adopting the older commercial civilisation whose independent cities they conquered, and of the greater rapidity of development which belongs to colonies in general.⁴ There it was that, in matters of religion and philosophy, the comparison of their own cults with those of their foreign neighbours first provoked their critical reflection, as the age of primitive warfare passed away. And there it was, accordingly, that on a basis of primitive Babylonian science there originated with THALES of Miletos (fl. B.C. 586), a Phoenician by descent,⁵ the higher science and philosophy of the Greek-speaking race.⁶

It is historically certain that Lydia had an ancient and close historical connection with Babylonian and Assyrian civilisation, whether through the "Hittites" or otherwise (Sayce, *Ancient Empires of the East*, 1884, pp. 217-219; Curtius, *Griechische Geschichte*, i, 63, 207; Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 166, 277, 299, 305-310; Soury, *Bréviaire de l'histoire du matérialisme*, 1881, pp. 30, 37 sq. Cp. as to Armenia, Edwards, *The Witness of Assyria*, 1893, p. 144); and in the seventh century the commercial connection between Lydia and Ionia, long close, was presumably friendly up to the time of the first attacks of the Lydian Kings, and even afterwards (Herodotos,

¹ Meyer, ii, 410-414.

² Cp. Curtius, i, 392-400, 416; Duncker, iii, 529.

³ Curtius, i, 112; Meyer, ii, 366.

⁴ Curtius, i, 201, 204, 205, 381; Grote, iii, 5; Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i, 23 (Eng. trans., i, 23).

⁵ Herodotos, i, 170; Diogenes Laërtius, *Thales*, c. i.

⁶ On the essentially anti-religious rationalism of the whole Ionian movement, cp. Meyer, ii, 753-7.

i, 20-23), Alyattes having made a treaty of peace with Miletos, which thereafter had peace during his long reign. This brings us to the time of Thales (640-548 B.C.). At the same time, the Ionian settlers of Miletos had from the first a close connection with the Karians (Herod. i, 146, and above, pp. 122-3), whose near affinity with the Semites, at least in religion, is seen in their practice of cutting their foreheads at festivals (*Id.*, ii, 61; cp. Grote, ed. 1888, i, 27, *note*; E. Curtius, i, 36, 42; Busolt, i, 33; and Spiegel, *Iranische Alterthumskunde*, i, 228). Thales was thus in the direct sphere of Babylonian culture before the conquest of Cyrus; and his Milesian pupils or successors, Anaximandros and Anaximenes, stand for the same influences. Herakleitos in turn was of Ephesus, an Ionian city in the same culture-sphere; Anaxagoras was of Klazomenai, another Ionian city, as had been Hermotimos, of the same philosophic school; the Eleatic school, founded by Xenophanes and carried on by Parmenides and the elder Zeno, come from the same matrix, Elea having been founded by exiles from Ionian Phokaia on its conquest by the Persians; and Pythagoras, in turn, was of the Ionian city of Samos, in the same sixth century. Finally, Protagoras and Demokritos were of Abdera, an Ionian colony in Thrace; Leukippos, the teacher of Demokritos, was either an Abderite, a Milesian, or an Elean; and Archelaos, the pupil of Anaxagoras and a teacher of Sokrates, is said to have been a Milesian. Wellhausen (*Israel*, p. 473 of vol. of *Prolegomena*, Eng. tr.) has spoken of the rise of philosophy on the "threatened and actual political annihilation of Ionia" as corresponding to the rise of Hebrew prophecy on the menace and the consummation of the Assyrian conquest. As regards Ionia this may hold in the sense that the stoppage of political freedom threw men back on philosophy, as happened later at Athens. But Thales philosophised before the Persian conquest.

§ 4.

Thales, like Homer, starts from the Babylonian conception of a beginning of all things in water; but in Thales the motive and the sequel are strictly cosmological and neither theological nor poetical. The phrase attributed to him, that "all things are full of Gods,"¹ clearly meant that in his opinion the forces of

¹ *The First Philosophers of Greece*, by A. Fairbanks, 1898, pp. 2, 3, 6. This compilation usefully supplies a revised text of the ancient philosophic fragments, with a translation of these and of the passages on the early thinkers by the later, and by the epitomists.

things inhered in the cosmos, and not in personal powers who spasmodically interfered with it.¹ It is probable that, as was surmised by Plutarch, a pantheistic conception of Zeus existed for the Ionian Greeks before his day.² To the later doxographers he "seems to have lost belief in the Gods."³ From the mere second-hand and often unintelligent statements which are all we have in his case, it is hard to make sure of his system; but that it was pantheistic⁴ and physicist seems clear. He conceived that matter not only came from but was resolvable into water; that all phenomena were ruled by law or "necessity"; and that the sun and planets (commonly regarded as deities) were bodies analogous to the earth, which he held to be spherical but "resting on water."⁵ For the rest, he speculated in meteorology and in astronomy, and is credited with having predicted a solar eclipse⁶—a clear proof of his knowledge of Chaldean science⁷—and with having introduced geometry into Greece from Egypt.⁸ To him, too, is ascribed a wise counsel to the Ionians in the matter of political federation,⁹ which, had it been followed, might have saved them from the Persian conquest; and he is one of the many early moralists who laid down the Golden Rule as the essence of the moral law.¹⁰ With his maxim, "Know thyself," he seems to mark a new departure in ancient thought: the balance of energy is shifted from myth and theosophy and poesy to analysis of consciousness and the cosmic process.

Probably later than Thales, but named by Aristotle

¹ Cp. Lange, *Gesch. des Mat.*, i, 126 (Eng. trans., i, 8, n.). Mr. Benn, usually one of the best of guides, seems to me not to put the right construction on the phrase (*The Greek Philosophers*, i, 8). Cp. R. W. Mackay, *The Progress of the Intellect*, 1850, i, 338.

² Mackay, as cited, p. 331.

³ Fairbanks, p. 4.

⁴ Diogenes Laërtius, *Thales*, c. 9.

⁵ Fairbanks, pp. 3, 7.

⁶ Herodotos, i, 74.

⁷ To him is ascribed by the Greeks the "discovery" of the constellation Ursus Major. Diog. c. 2. As it was called "Phoenike" by the Greeks, his knowledge would be of Phoenician derivation. Cp. Humboldt, *Kosmos*, Bohn trans., iii, 160.

⁸ Diog. Laërt., c. 3.

⁹ Herod., i, 170. Cp. Diogenes, c. 3.

¹⁰ Diog. Laërt., c. 9.

with him, is HIPPO, the first specifically named atheist¹ of Greek antiquity. The tradition runs that his tomb bore the epitaph: "This is the grave of Hippo, whom destiny, in destroying him, has made the equal of the immortal Gods."² If, as seems likely, he was the Hippo of Rhegion mentioned by Hippolytos,³ he speculated as to physical origins in the manner of Thales, making water generate fire, and that in turn produce the world.⁴

From this point Greek rationalism is continuous, despite reactions, till the Roman conquest, Miletos figuring as a general source of skepticism. ANAXIMANDROS (610–547 B.C.), pupil and companion of Thales, was like him an astronomer, geographer, and physicist, seeking for a first principle (for which he invented the name); affirming an infinite material cause, without beginning and indestructible,⁵ with an infinite number of worlds; and—still showing the Chaldean impulse—speculating curiously on the descent of man from something aquatic, as well as on the form and motion of the earth (figured by him as a cylinder⁶), the nature and motions of the solar system, and thunder and lightning.⁷ It seems doubtful whether, as affirmed by Eudemus, he taught the doctrine of the earth's motion; but that this doctrine was derived from the Babylonian schools of astronomy is so probable that it may have been accepted in Miletos in his day.

ANAXIMENES (fl. 548 B.C.), yet another Milesian,

¹ Plutarch, *Against the Stoics*, c. 31; Simplicius, *Physica*, i, 6.

² Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* c. 4.

³ *Refutation of all Heresies*, i, 14.

⁴ Cp. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, i, 3; *De anima*, i, 2.

⁵ Fairbanks, pp. 9–10. Mr. Benn (*Greek Philosophers*, i, 9) decides that the early philosophers, while realising that *ex nihilo nihil fit*, had not grasped the complementary truth that nothing can be annihilated. But even if the teaching ascribed to Anaximandros be set aside as contradictory (since he spoke of generation and destruction within the infinite), we have the statement of Diogenes Laërtius (B. ix, c. 9, § 57) that Diogenes of Apollonia, pupil of Anaximenes, gave the full Lucretian formula.

⁶ Diogenes Laërtius, however (ii, 2), makes him agree with Thales.

⁷ Fairbanks, pp. 9–16. Diogenes makes him the inventor of the gnomon and of the first map and globe, as well as a maker of clocks. Cp. Grote, i, 330, *note*.

pupil in turn of Anaximandros, speculates similarly, making his infinite and first principle the air, in which he conceives the earth to be suspended ; theorises on the rainbow, earthquakes, the nature and the revolution of the heavenly bodies (which, with the earth, he supposed to be broad and flat) ; and affirms the eternity of motion and the perishableness of the earth.¹ It is after a generation of such persistent questioning of Nature that we find in HERAKLEITOS of Ephesus (fl. 500 B.C.)—still in the Ionian culture-sphere—a positive and unsparing criticism of the prevailing beliefs. No thinker among the Ionians left a deeper impression than he of massive force and piercing intensity : above all of the gnomic utterances of his age, his have the ring of character and the edge of personality ; and the gossiping Diogenes, after setting out by calling him the most arrogant of men, concedes that the brevity and weight of his expression are not to be matched. It was due rather to this, probably, than to his metaphysic—though that has an arresting quality—that there grew up a school of Herakliteans calling themselves by his name. And though doubt attaches to some of his sayings, and even to his date, there can be small question that he was mordantly freethinking, though a man of royal descent. He has stern sayings about “bringing forth untrustworthy witnesses to confirm disputed points,” and about eyes and ears being “bad witnesses for men, since their souls lack understanding.”² “What can be seen, heard, and learned, this I prize,” is one of his declarations ; and he is credited with contemning book-learning, as having failed to give wisdom to Hesiod, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, and Hekataios.³ The belief in progress, he roundly insists, stops progress.⁴ From his cryptic utterances it may be gathered that he too was a pantheist ;⁵ and from his insistence on the immanence of

¹ Fairbanks, pp. 17–22.

² Polybius, iv, 40 ; Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, viii, 126. —Fairbanks, pp. 25, 27 ; Frag. 4, 14. Cp. 92, 111, 113.

³ Diog. Laërt., ix, i, 2.

⁴ Fairbanks, Fr. 134.

⁵ *Id.* Frag. 36, 67.

strife in all things,¹ as from others of his sayings, that he was of the Stoic mood. It was doubtless in resentment of immoral religion that he said² Homer and Archilochos deserved flogging; as he is severe on the phallic worship of Dionysos,³ on the absurdity of prayer to images, and on popular pietism in general.⁴ One of his sayings, *ἦθος ἀνθρώπου δαίμων*,⁵ "character is a man's dæmon," seems to be the definite assertion of rationalism in affairs as against the creed of special providences.

A confusion of tradition has arisen between the early Herakleitos, "the Obscure," and the similarly-named writer of the first century of our era, who was either one Herakleides or one using the name of Herakleitos. As the later writer certainly allegorised Homer—reducing Apollo to the Sun, Athenê to Thought, and so on—and claimed thus to free him from the charge of impiety, it seems highly probable that it is from him that the scholiast on the *Iliad*, xv, 18, cites the passage scolding the atheists who attacked the Homeric myths. The theme and the tone do not belong to 500 B.C., when only the boldest—as Herakleitos—would be likely to attack Homer, and when there is no other literary trace of atheism. Grote, however (i, 374, *note*), cites the passages without comment as referring to the early philosopher, who is much more probably credited, as above, with denouncing Homer himself. Concerning the later Herakleitos or Herakleides, see Dr. Hatch's Hibbert Lectures on *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, 1890, pp. 61, 62.

But even apart from the confusion with the late Herakleides, there is difficulty in settling the period of the Ephesian thinker. Diogenes Laërtius states that he flourished about the 69th Olympiad (504–500 B.C.). Another account, preserved by Eusebius, places him in the 80th or 81st Olympiad, in the infancy of Sokrates, and for this date there are other grounds (Ueberweg, i, 40); but yet other evidences carry us back to the earlier. As Diogenes notes five writers of the name—two being poets, one a historian, and one a "serio-comic" personage—and there is record of several Herakleides, there is considerable

¹ Fairbanks, *Frag.*, 43, 44, 46, 62.

² *Diog. Laërt.*, last cit. This saying is by some ascribed to the later Herakleides (see Fairbanks, *Fr.* 119 and note); but it does not seem to be in his vein, which is wholly pro-Homeric.

³ *Clem. Alex., Protrept.*, c. 2, Wilson's trans., p. 41. The passage is obscure, but Mr. Fairbanks' translation (*Fr.* 127) is excessively so.

⁴ Clemens, as cited, p. 32; Fairbanks, *Fr.* 124, 125, 130.

⁵ Fairbanks, *Fr.* 21.

room for false attributions. The statement of Diogenes that the Ephesian was "wont to call opinion the sacred disease" (i, 6, § 7) is commonly relegated to the spurious sayings of Herakleitos, and it suggests the last mentioned of his namesakes. But see Max Müller, *Hibbert Lectures on Indian Religion*, p. 6, for the opinion that it is genuine, and that by "opinion" was meant "religion." The saying, says Dr. Müller, "seems to me to have the massive, full, and noble ring of Herakleitos." It is hardly for rationalists to demur.

But while thought was travelling so much faster in Ionia than in the Greek motherland, it was travelling still faster in the colonies planted from Ionia in Italy and Thrace. About 550 B.C. was founded the city of Elea (Hyela, or Velia), on the western Italian coast, south of Paestum, by unsubduable Phokaians seeking a new home after the Persian conquest, and after they had been further defeated in the attempt to live as pirates in Corsica.¹ Thither came XENOPHANES of Kolophon (fl. 538 B.C.), aged about thirty, likewise seeking freedom. In that hardy polity, freedom of thought and of speech must have gone hand in hand; for the Ionic pantheism of Xenophanes² expressed itself in an attack on anthropomorphic religion, no less direct and much more ratiocinative than that of any Hebrew prophet upon idolatry. "Mortals," he wrote, in a famous passage, "suppose that the Gods are born, and wear man's clothing and have voice and body. But if cattle or lions had hands, so as to paint with their hands and make works of art as men do, they would paint their Gods and give them bodies like their own—horses like horses, cattle like cattle."³ On Homer and Hesiod, the myth-singers, his attack is no less stringent: "they attributed to the Gods all things that with men are of ill-fame and blame: they told of them countless nefarious things—thefts, adulteries, and deception of each other."⁴ And when the Eleans, somewhat shaken by such

¹ Herodotos, i, 163-7; Grote, iii, 421.

² Fairbanks, pp. 79, 80.

³ Fairbanks, p. 67, Fr. 5, 6; Clemens Alex., *Stromata*, B. v., Wilson's trans., ii, 285-6. Cp. B. vii, c. 4.

⁴ Fairbanks, Fr. 7.

criticism,¹ asked him whether they should sacrifice and sing a dirge to Leukothea, the child-bereft Sea-Goddess, he bade them not to sing a dirge if they thought her divine, and not to sacrifice if she were human.² Beside this ringing radicalism, not yet out of date, the physics and philosophy of the Eleatic freethinker are less noticeable, the physics being weak, though the philosophy was not unsubtle nor unoriginal ; but it is interesting to find him reasoning from fossil-marks that what was now land had once been sea-covered, and been left mud ; and that the moon is probably inhabited.³ Yet, with all this alertness of speculation, Xenophanes sounds the note of merely negative skepticism which, for lack of fruitful scientific research, was to become more and more common in Greek thought :⁴ "no man," he avows in one verse, "knows truly anything, and no man ever will."⁵

A limit was doubtless soon set to free speech even in Elea ; and the Eleatic school after Xenophanes, in the hands of PARMENIDES (fl. 500 B.C.), ZENO (fl. 464), and MELISSOS of Samos (fl. 444), and their successors, is found turning first to deep metaphysic and then to verbal dialectic, to discussion on being and not being, and the impossibility of motion, and the frivolous problem of Achilles and the tortoise. It is conceivable that thought took these lines because others were socially closed. Melissos, a man of action, who led a successful sally to capture the Athenian fleet,⁶ was apparently the most pronounced freethinker of the

¹ In his poetry he is gravely religious, standing for respect to deity as against the old myths. See the extract in Athenæus, B. xi, c. 7 ; Fairbanks, Fr. 21. This two-sidedness on the part of a freethinker of that age is to be kept in view in estimating the opinions of Æschylus (above, p. 132 sq.).

² Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, ii, 23, § 27. A similar saying is attributed to Herakleitos, on slight authority (Fairbanks, p. 54).

³ Cicero, *Academica*, ii, 39 ; Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*, iii. 23. Anaxagoras and Democritus held the same view. Diog. Laërt. B. ii, c. iii, iv (§ 8) ; Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Placitis Philosoph.*, ii, 25.

⁴ Cp. Mackay, *Progress of the Intellect*, i, 340.

⁵ Diog. Laërt. in life of Pyrrho, B. ix, c. xi, 8 (§ 72).

⁶ Plutarch, *Perikles*, c. 26.

three, in that he said of the Gods "there was no need to define them, since there was no knowledge of them."¹ Such utterance could not be carried far in any Greek community; and from Melissos and Parmenides—the last the most philosophic mind of all²—there is a rapid descent to professional verbalism, popular life the while proceeding on the old levels.

It was in this epoch of declining energy and declining freedom that there grew up the nugatory doctrine, associated with the Eleatic school, that the only realities are mental,³ a formula which eluded at once the problems of nature and the crudities of religion, and so made its fortune with the educated class. Meant to support the cause of reason, it was soon turned, as every slackly-held doctrine must be, to a different account. In the hands of Plato, it developed into the doctrine of ideas, which in the later Christian world was to play so large a part, as "Realism," in checking scientific thought; and in Greece it fatally fostered the indolent evasion of research in physics.⁴ Ultimately this made for supernaturalism, which had never been discarded by the main body even of rationalising thinkers.⁵ Thus the geographer and historian HEKATAIOS of Miletos (fl. 500 B.C.), living at the great centre of rationalism, while rejecting the mass of Greek fables as "ridiculous," and proceeding in a fashion long popular to translate them into historical facts, yet held himself to be of divine descent.⁶ At the same time, he held by

¹ Diog. Laërt., B. ix, c. iv, 3 (§ 24).

² See good estimates of Parmenides in Benn's *Greek Philosophers*, i, 17-19, and *Philosophy of Greece in relation to the Character of its People*, pp. 83-95; in J. A. Symonds' *Studies of the Greek Poets*, 3rd ed., 1893, vol. i, c. 6; and in Zeller, i, 580 sq. Mr. Benn finally gives very high praise to Melissos (*Philos. of Greece*, pp. 91-92). He held strongly by the Ionian conception of the eternity of matter. Fairbanks, p. 125.

³ Cp. Mackay, *Progress of the Intellect*, i, 310.

⁴ "The difference between the Ionians and Eleatae was this: the former endeavoured to trace an idea among phenomena by aid of observation; the latter evaded the difficulty by dogmatically asserting the objective existence of an idea" (Mackay, as last cited).

⁵ Cp. Mackay, i, 352-3, as to the survival of veneration of the heavenly bodies in the various schools.

⁶ Grote, i, 350.

such fables as that of the floating island in the Nile and that of the supernormal Hyperboreans. This blending of old and new habits of mind is, indeed, perhaps the strongest ground for affirming the genuineness of his fragments, which has been disputed.¹ But from his time forward there are many signs of a broad movement of criticism, doubt, inquiry, and reconstruction, involving an extensive discussion of historical as well as religious tradition:² there had begun, in short, for the rapidly-developing Greeks, a "discovery of man" such as is ascribed in later times to the age of the Italian Renaissance; and in the next generation came the father of humanists, Herodotos, who implicitly carries the process of discrimination still further than did Hekataios.

Still, there was only to be a partial enlightenment of the race, such as we have seen occurring, perhaps about the same period, in India. The social difference between Greece and the monarchic civilisations was after all only one of degree: there, as elsewhere, the social problem was finally unsolved; and the limits to Greek progress were soon approached. But the evolution went far in many places, and it is profoundly interesting to trace it.

§ 5.

Compared with the early Milesians and with Xenophanes, the elusive PYTHAGORAS (fl. 540–510 B.C.) is not so much a rationalistic as a theosophic freethinker; but to freethought his name belongs in so far as the system connected with it did rationalise, and discarded mythology. If the biographic data be in any degree trustworthy, it starts like Milesian speculation from oriental precedents.³ Pythagoras was of Samos in the Ægean; and the traditions have it that he was a pupil of Pherekydes the Syrian, and that before settling at

¹ Meyer, ii, 9, 759 (§§ 5, 465).

² *Id.*, §§ 6, 466.

³ Compare Meyer, ii, § 502, as to the close resemblances between Pythagoreanism and Orphicism.

Krôton, in Italy, he travelled in Egypt, and had intercourse with the Chaldean Magi. Some parts of the Pythagorean code of life, at least, point to an eastern derivation.

The striking resemblance between the doctrine and practice of the Pythagoreans and those of the Jewish Essenes has led Zeller to argue (*Philosophie der Griechen*, Th. iii, Abth. 2) that the latter were a branch of the former. Bishop Lightfoot, on the other hand, noting that the Essenes did not hold the specially prominent Pythagorean doctrines of numbers and of the transmigration of souls, traces Essenism to Zoroastrian influence (Ed. of *Colossians*, Appendix on the Essenes, pp. 150-1; rep. in *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, 1892, pp. 369-372). This raises the issue whether both Pythagoreanism and Essenism were not of Persian derivation; and Dr. Schürer (*Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, Eng. trans., Div. II, vol. ii, p. 218) pronounces in favour of an oriental origin for both. The new connection between Persia and Ionia just at or before the time of Pythagoras (fl. 530 B.C.) squares with this view; but it is further to be noted that the phenomenon of monasticism, common to Pythagoreans and Essenes, arises in Buddhism about the Pythagorean period; and as it is hardly likely that Buddhism in the sixth century B.C. reached Asia Minor, there remains the possibility of some special diffusion of the new ideal from the Babylonian sphere after the conquest by Cyrus, there being no trace of a Persian monastic system. The resemblances to Orphicism likewise suggest a Babylonian source, as does the doctrine of numbers, which is not Zoroastrian. As to Buddhism, the argument for a Buddhist origin of Essenism shortly before our era (cp. A. Lillie, *Buddhism in Christendom* and *The Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity*; E. Bunsen, *The Angel-Messiah; or, Buddhists, Essenes, and Christians*—all three to be read with much caution) does not meet the case of the Pythagorean precedents for Essenism.

As regards the mystic doctrine that numbers are, as it were, the moving principle in the cosmos—another thesis not unlikely to arise in that Babylonian world whence came the whole system of numbers for the later ancients¹—we can but pronounce it a development of thought *in vacuo*, and look further for the source of Pythagorean influence in the moral and social code of

¹ Meyer, i, 186; ii, 535.

the movement, in its science, in its pantheism,¹ its contradictory dualism,² and perhaps in its doctrine of transmigration of souls. On the side of natural science, its absurdities³ point to the fatal lack of observation which so soon stopped progress in Greek physics and biology. Yet in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, and the science of sound, the school seems to have done good scientific work ; being indeed praised by the critical Aristotle for doing special service in that way.⁴ It is recorded that Philolaos, the successor of Pythagoras, was the first to teach openly (about 460 B.C.) the doctrine of the motion of the earth⁵—which, however, as above noted, was also said to have been previously taught by Anaximandros⁶ (from whom some incline to derive the Pythagorean theory of numbers in general⁷) and by Hiketas or Iketas (or Niketas) of Syracuse.⁸ Ecphantos, of that city, is also credited with asserting the revolutions of the earth on its axis ; and he, too, is grouped with the Pythagoreans, though he seems to have had a pantheism of his own.⁹ Philolaos in particular is recorded to have been prosecuted for his teaching,¹⁰ which for many was a blasphemy ; and it may be that this was the reason of its being specially ascribed to him, though current in the East long before his day. In the fragments ascribed to him is affirmed, in divergence from other Pythagoreans, the eternity of the earth ; and in other ways he seems to have been an innovator.¹¹ In any case, the Pythagorean conception

¹ Fairbanks, pp. 145, 151, 155, etc.

² *Id.*, p. 143.

³ *Id.*, p. 154.

⁴ *Metaph.*, i, 5 ; Fairbanks, p. 136.

⁵ Diog. Laërt., *Philolaos* (B. viii, c. 7).

⁶ L. U. K. *Hist. of Astronomy*, p. 20 ; A. Berry's *Short Hist. of Astronomy*, 1898, p. 25 ; Narrien's *Histor. Account of the Origin and Prog. of Astron.*, 1850, p. 163.

⁷ See Benn, *Greek Philosophers*, i, 11.

⁸ Diog. Laërt., in life of *Philolaos* ; Cicero, *Academica*, ii, 39. Cicero, following Theophrastus, is explicit as to the teaching of Hiketas.

⁹ Hippolytos, *Refutation of all Heresies*, i, 13. Cp. Renouvier, *Manuel de la philos. ancienne*, 1844, i, 201, 205, 238-9.

¹⁰ Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Placitis Philosoph.*, iii, 13, 14.

¹¹ Ueberweg, i, 49. Cp. Tertullian (*Apol.*, c. 11), who says Pythagoras taught that the world was uncreated ; and the contrary statement of Aetius (in Fairbanks, pp. 146-7).

of the earth's motion was a speculative one, wide of the facts, and not identical with the modern doctrine, save in so far as Pythagoras—or Philolaos—had rightly conceived the earth as a sphere.¹

It is noteworthy, however, that in conjecturing that the whole solar system moves round a "central fire," Pythagoras carried his thought nearly as far as the moderns. The fanciful side of his system is seen in his hypothesis of a counter-earth (*Anti-chthon*) invented to bring up the number of celestial bodies in our system to ten, the "complete" number. (Berry, as cited.) Narrien (p. 163) misses this simple explanation of the idea.

As to politics, finally, it seems hard to solve the paradox that Pythagoras is pronounced the first teacher of the principle of community of goods,² and that his adherents at Krôton formed an aristocratic league, so detested by the people for its anti-democratism that its members were finally massacred in their meeting-place, their leader, according to one tradition, being slain with them. The solution seems to be that the early movement was in no way monastic or communistic; that it was, however, a secret society; and that, whatever its doctrines, its members were mostly of the upper class.³ If they held by the general rejection of popular religion attributed to Pythagoras, they would so much the more exasperate the demos; for though at Krôton, as in the other Grecian colonial cities, there was considerable freedom of thought and speech, the populace can nowhere have been freethinking.⁴ In any case, it was after its political overthrow, and still more in the Italian revival of the second century B.C., that the mystic and superstitious features of Pythagoreanism were most multiplied; and doubtless the master's teachings were often much perverted by his devotees. It was only too

¹ Berry, *Short Hist. of Astron.*, pp. 22, 25. The question is ably handled by Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 199-205.

² Diog. Laërt., viii, i, 8.

³ The whole question is carefully sifted by Grote, iv, 76-94. Dr. Burnet (*Early Greek Philosophy*, 1892, pp. 94-5) sums up that the Pythagorean Order was an attempt to overrule or supersede the State.

⁴ Cp. Dr. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, pp. 95-6.

easy. He had laid down, as so many another moralist, that justice consisted in reciprocity ; but he taught of virtue in terms of his theory of numbers—a sure way of putting conduct out of touch with reality.¹ Thus we find the later Pythagoreans laying it down as a canon that no story once fully current concerning the Gods was to be disbelieved²—the complete negation of philosophical freethought and a sharp contradiction of the older view which represented the shade of Pythagoras as saying that he had seen in Tartaros the shade of Homer hanged to a tree, and that of Hesiod chained to a pillar of brass, for the monstrous things they had ascribed to the Gods.³ It must have taken a good deal of decadence to bring an innovating sect to that pass ; and even about 200 B.C. we find the freethinking Ennius at Rome calling himself a Pythagorean ;⁴ but the course of things in Magna Graecia was mostly downward after the sixth century ; the ferocious destruction of Sybaris by the Krotoniates helping to promote the decline.⁵ Intellectual life, in Magna Graecia as in Ionia, obeyed the general tendency.

Before the decadence comes, however, the phenomenon of rationalism occurs on all hands in the colonial cities, older and younger alike ; and direct criticism of creed kept pace with the indirect. About 520 B.C. THEAGENES of Rhegion, in Southern Italy, had begun for the Greeks the process of reducing the unacceptable God-stories in Homer and Hesiod—notably the battle of the Gods in the Iliad—to mere allegories of the cosmic elements⁶—a device natural to and practised by liberal conservatives in all religious systems under stress of skeptical attack, and afterwards much employed in the

¹ Fairbanks, p. 143.

² Grote, *Plato and the Other Companions of Sokrates*, ed. 1885, iv, 163.

³ Diog. Laërt., B. viii, c. i, 19 (§ 21).

⁴ Ennii *Fragmenta*, ed. Hesselius, 1707, pp. 1, 4-7 ; Horace, *Epist.* ii, i, 52 ; Persius, *Sat.* vi.

⁵ Grote, *History*, iv, 97.

⁶ Scholiast on Iliad, xx, 67 ; Tatian, *Adv. Græcos*, c. 48 (31) ; W. Christ, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, 3te Aufl., p. 63 ; Grote, ch. xvi (i, 374).

Hellenic world.¹ Soon the attack became more stringent. At Syracuse we find the great comic dramatist EPICARMOS, about 470 B.C., treating the deities on the stage in a spirit of such audacious burlesque² as must be held to imply unbelief. Aristophanes, at Athens, indeed, shows a measure of the same spirit while posing as a conservative in religion; but Epicharmos was professedly something of a Pythagorean and philosopher,³ and was doubtless protected by Hiero, at whose court he lived, against any religious resentment he may have aroused. The story of SIMONIDES' answer to Hiero's question as to the nature of the Gods—first asking a day to think, then two days, then four, then avowing that meditation only made the problem harder⁴—points to the prevalent tone among the cultured.

§ 6.

At last the critical spirit finds utterance, in the great Periklean period, at Athens, but first by way of importation from Ionia, where Miletos had fallen in the year 494. ANAXAGORAS of Klazomenai (fl. 480–450 B.C.; d. 428) is the first freethinker historically known to have been legally prosecuted and condemned⁵ for his freethought; and it was in the Athens of Perikles, despite Perikles' protection, that the attack was made. Coming of the Ionian line of thinkers, and himself a pupil of Anaximenes of Miletos, he held firmly by the scientific view of the cosmos, and taught that the sun, instead of being animated and a deity as the Athenians believed, was "a red hot mass many times larger than the Peloponnesos"⁶—and the moon a fiery (or earthy) solid body having in it plains and mountains and valleys—this

¹ See above, p. 143.

² K. O. Müller, *Dorians*, Eng. trans., ii, 365–8; Mommsen, *Hist. of Rome*, Eng. trans., ed. 1894, iii, 113.

³ Grote, i, 338, note.

⁴ Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 22.

⁵ Philolaos, as we saw, is said to have been prosecuted, but is not said to have been condemned.

⁶ Fairbanks, pp. 245, 255, 261; Diog. Laërt., B. ii, c. iii, 4 (§ 8).

while asserting that infinite mind was the source and introducer of all the motion in the infinite universe;¹ infinite in extent and infinitely divisible. This "materialistic" doctrine as to the heavenly bodies was propounded, as Sokrates tells in his defence, in books that in his day anyone could buy for a drachma; and Anaxagoras further taught, like Theagenes, that the mythical personages of the poets were mere abstractions invested with name and gender.² Withal he was no brawler; and even in pious Athens, where he taught in peace for many years, he might have died in peace but for his intimacy with the most renowned of his pupils, Perikles.

It is told of the latter by the pious Plutarch, himself something of a believer in portents, that he greatly admired Anaxagoras, from whom he "seems to have learned to despise those superstitious fears which the common phenomena of the heavens produce in those who, ignorant of their cause, and knowing nothing about them, refer them all to the immediate action of the Gods."³ And even the stately eloquence and imperturbable bearing of the great statesman are said to have been learned from the Ionian master, whom he followed in "adorning his oratory with apt illustrations from physical science."⁴ The old philosopher, however, whom men called "Nous" or Intelligence because of the part the name played in his teaching, left his property to go to ruin in his devotion to ideas; and it is told, with small probability, that at one time, old and indigent, he covered his head with his robe and decided to starve to death; till Perikles, hearing of it, hastened to beseech him to live to give his pupil counsel.⁵

¹ Fairbanks, pp. 239-245. Cp. Grote, *Plato*, i, 54, and Ueberweg, i, 66, as to nature of the *Nous* of Anaxagoras.

² Grote, i, 374; Hesychius, s.v. AGAMEMNONA: cp. Diog. Laërt., B. ii, c. iii, 7 (§ 11), Tatian, *Adv. Græcos*, c. 37 (21).

³ Plutarch, *Perikles*, c. 6.

⁴ *Id.* cc. 5, 8.

⁵ *Id.* c. 16. The old man is said to have uttered the reproach: "Perikles, those who want to use a lamp supply it with oil."

At length it occurred to the statesman's enemies to strike at him through his guide, philosopher, and friend. They had already procured the banishment of another of his teachers, Damon, as "an intriguer and a friend of despotism";¹ and one of their fanatics, Diopeithes, a priest and a violent demagogue,² laid the way for an attack on Anaxagoras by obtaining the enactment of a law that "prosecutions should be laid against all who disbelieved in religion and held theories of their own about things on high."³ Anaxagoras was thus open to indictment on the score alike of his physics and of his mythology; though, seeing that his contemporary Diogenes of Apollonia (who before Demokritos taught "nothing out of nothing: nothing into nothing," and affirmed the sphericity of the earth) was also in some danger of his life at Athens,⁴ it is probable that the prosecution was grounded on his physicist teaching. Saved by Perikles from the death punishment, but by one account fined five talents,⁵ he either was exiled or chose to leave the intolerant city; and he made his home at Lampsakos, where, as the story runs, he won from the municipality the favour that every year the children should have a holiday in the month in which he died.⁶ It is significant of his general originality that he was reputed the first Greek who wrote a book in prose.⁷

In the memorable episode of his expulsion from Athens we have a finger-post to the road travelled later by Greek civilisation. At Athens itself the bulk of the free population was ignorant and bigoted enough to allow of the law being used by any fanatic or malignant

¹ Plutarch, *Perikles*, c. 4.

² Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. de Alt.* iv, 277.

³ Plutarch, *Perikles*, c. 32.

⁴ Diog. Laërt., B. ix, c. ix (§ 57), citing the *Defence of Sokrates* by Demetrius Phalereus.

⁵ *Id.* B. ii, c. iii, 9 (§ 12), citing Sotion. Another writer of philosophers' lives, Hermippus (same cit.), said he had been thrown into prison; and yet a third, Hieronymus, said he was released out of pity because of his emaciated appearance when produced in court by Perikles.

⁶ Diog. Laërt. last cit., 10 (§ 14).

⁷ *Id.* 8 (§ 11).

partisan against any professed rationalist; and there is no sign that Perikles dreamt of applying the one cure for the evil—the systematic bestowal of rationalistic instruction on all. The fatal maxim of ancient skepticism, that religion is a necessary restraint upon the multitude, brought it about that everywhere, in the last resort, the unenlightened multitude became a restraint upon reason and freethought.¹ In the more aristocratically ruled colonial cities, as we have seen, philosophic speech was comparatively free: it was the gulled Athenian democracy that brought religious intolerance into Greek life, playing towards science, in form of law, the part that the fanatics of Egypt and Palestine had played towards the worshippers of other Gods than their own.

With a baseness of which the motive may be divided between the instincts of faction and of faith, the anti-Periklean party carried their attack yet further; and on their behalf a comic playwright, Hermippos, brought a charge of impiety against the statesman's unwedded wife, ASPASIA.² There can be no doubt that that famous woman cordially shared the opinions and ideals of her husband, joining as she habitually did in the philosophic talk of his home circle. As a Milesian she was likely enough to be a freethinker; and all that was most rational in Athens acknowledged her culture and her charm.³ Perikles, who had not taken the risk of letting Anaxagoras come to trial, himself defended Aspasia before the dikastery, his indignation breaking through his habitual restraint in a passion of tears, which, according to the jealous Æschines,⁴ won an acquittal.

Placed as he was, Perikles could but guard his own

¹ Even in the early progressive period "the same time which set up rationalism developed a deep religious influence in the masses." (Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* ii, 728. Cp. iii, 425; also Grote, vii, 30; and Benn, *Philosophy of Greece*, 1898, pp. 69-70.)

² Plutarch, *Perikles*, c. 32.

³ Cp. Grote, v, 24; Curtius, ii, 208-9.

⁴ Plutarch, as cited. Plutarch also states, however, that the only occasion on which Perikles gave way to emotion in public was that of the death of his favourite son.

head and heart, leaving the evil instrument of a religious inquisition to subsist. How far he held with Anaxagoras we can but divine.¹ There is probably no truth in Plutarch's tale that "whenever he ascended the tribune to speak he used first to pray to the Gods that nothing unfitted for the occasion might fall from his lips."² But as a party-leader he, as a matter of course, observed the conventions; and he may have reasoned that the prosecutions of Anaxagoras and Aspasia, like that directed against Pheidias, stood merely for contemporary political malice, and not for any lasting danger to mental freedom. However that might be, Athens continued to remain the most aggressively intolerant and tradition-mongering of Hellenic cities. So marked is this tendency among the Athenians that for modern students Herodotos, whose history was published in 445 B.C., is relatively a rationalist in his treatment of fable,³ bringing as he did the spirit of Ionia into things traditional and religious. But such an influence as his could avail little for critical thought. To no man, apparently, did it occur to resist the religious spirit by systematic propaganda: that, like the principle of representative government, was to be hit upon only in a later age.⁴ Not by a purely literary culture, relating life merely to poetry and myth, tradition and superstition, were men to be made fit to conduct a stable society. And the spirit of pious persecution, once generated, went from bad to worse, crowning itself with crime, till at length the overthrow of Athenian self-government

¹ Holm (*Griechische Geschichte*, ii, 335) decides that Perikles sought to *Ionise* his fellow-Athenians; and Dr. Burnet, coinciding (*Early Greek Philosophy*, 1892, p. 277), suggests that he and Aspasia brought Anaxagoras to Athens with that aim.

² *Perikles*, c. 8.

³ "Der Kleinasiatische Rationalist Herodot." A. Bauer, in Ilberg's *Neue Jahrbuch für das klassische Altertum*, ix (1902), 235, following Eduard Meyer (iv, § 448), who, however (§ 447), points to the lack of scientific thought or training in Herodotos as in Thukydides. Ignorance of Nature remained a Greek characteristic.

⁴ Cp. Meyer, iv, § 446, as to the inadequacy of Athenian culture, and the unchanging ignorance of the populace on matters of physical science.

wrought a forlorn liberty of scientific speech at the cost of the liberty of political action which is the basis of all sound life.

§ 7.

While Athens was gaining power and glory and beauty without popular wisdom, the colonial city of Abdera, in Thrace, founded by Ionians, had like others carried on the great impulse of Ionian philosophy, and had produced in the fifth century some of the great thinkers of the race. Concerning the greatest of these, DEMOKRITOS, and the next in importance, PROTAGORAS, we have no sure dates;¹ but it is probable that the second, whether older or younger, was influenced by the first, who indeed has influenced all scientific philosophy down to our own day. How much he learned from his master LEUKIPPOS cannot now be ascertained.² Logically continuing the non-theistic line of thought, Demokritos either struck out or newly assimilated and developed one of the most fruitful of all scientific principles, the atomic theory. That this idea again is a direct development from Babylonian science is not impossible; at least there seems to be no doubt that Demokritos had travelled far and wide,³ whether or not he had been brought up, as the tradition goes, by Persian magi;⁴ and that he told how the cosmic views of Anaxagoras, which scandalised the Athenians, were current in the East.⁵ But he stands out as one of the most original minds in the whole history of thought. No Greek thinker, not Aristotle himself, has struck so deep as he into fundamental problems; though the absurd label of "the laughing

¹ See the point discussed by Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i, 128-9, 131-2, notes 10 and 31 (Eng. trans., i, 15, 39). Ritter and Preller say "Protagoras floret circa a. 450-430"; "Democritus natus circa a. 460 floret a. 430-410, obit circa a. 357."

² Cp. Ueberweg, i, 68-69; Renouvier, *Manuel de la philos. ancienne*, i, 238.

³ Lange, i, 10-11 (trans., p. 17); Clem. Alex., *Stromata*, i, 15; Diog. Laërt., B. ix, c. vii, 2 (§ 35).

⁴ On this also see Lange, i, 128 (trans. p. 15, note).

⁵ Diog. Laërt., B. ix, c. vii, 2 (§ 34). Cp. Renouvier, i, 239-241.

philosopher," bestowed on him by some peculiarly un-philosophic mind, has delayed the later recognition of his greatness, clear as it was to Bacon.¹ The vital maxim, "Nothing from nothing : nothing into nothing," derives substantially from him. His atomic theory, held in conjunction with a conception of "mind-stuff" similar to that of Anaxagoras, may be termed the high-water mark of ancient scientific thought ; and it is noteworthy that somewhat earlier in the same age EMPEDOKLES of Agrigentum, another product of the freer colonial life, threw out a certain glimmer of the Darwinian conception that adaptations prevail in nature just because the adaptations fit organisms to survive, and the non-adapted perish.² In his teaching, too, the doctrine of the indestructibility of matter is clear and firm ;³ and the denial of anthropomorphic deity is explicit.⁴ But Empedokles wrought out no solid system : "half-mystic and half-rationalist, he made no attempt to reconcile the two inconsistent sides of his intellectual character";⁵ and his explicit teaching of metempsychosis⁶ and other Pythagoreanisms gave foothold for more delusion than he ever dispelled.⁷ On the whole, he is one of the most remarkable personalities of antiquity, moving among men with a pomp and gravity which made them think of him as a God, denouncing their sacrifices, and no less their eating of flesh ; and checking his notable self-exaltation by recalling the general littleness of men. But he did little to enlighten them. Demokritos, again, shunned dialectic and discussion, and founded no school ;⁸ and although his atomism was later adopted by Epicurus, it

¹ See in particular the *De principiis atque originibus* (*Works*, Routledge's 1-vol. ed., 1905, pp. 649-650).

² Fairbanks, pp. 189-191. The idea is not put with any such definiteness as is suggested by Lange, i, 23-25 (trans., pp. 33-35), and Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philos.*, Eng. trans., i, 62, n. But Ueberweg's exposition is illuminating.

³ Fairbanks, pp. 136, 169.

⁴ *Id.*, p. 201.

⁵ Benn, i, 28.

⁶ Fairbanks, p. 205.

⁷ See a good study of Empedokles in J. A. Symonds' *Studies of the Greek Poets*, 3rd ed., 1893, vol. i, ch. 7 ; and another in Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 163-182.

⁸ Cp. Renouvier, i, 239-262 ; Lange, p. 11 (trans., p. 17).

was no more developed on a basis of investigation and experiment than was the biology of Empedokles. Greek society failed to set up the conditions needed for progress beyond the point gained by its unguided forces.

Thus when Protagoras ventured to read, at the house of the freethinking EURIPIDES, a treatise of his own, beginning with the avowal that he offered no opinion as to the existence of the Gods, life being too short for the inquiry,¹ the remark got wind, and he had to fly for his life, though Euripides and perhaps most of the guests were very much of the same way of thinking.² In the course of his flight, the tradition goes, the philosopher was drowned ; and his book was publicly burned—the earliest known instance of censorship of the press.³ Partisan malice was doubtless at work in his case as in that of Anaxagoras ; for the philosophic doctrine of Protagoras became common enough. It is not impossible, though the date is doubtful, that the attack on him was one of the results of the great excitement in Athens in the year 415 B.C. over the sacrilegious mutilation of the figures of Hermes, the familial or boundary-God, in the streets by night. It was about that time that the poet DIAGORAS of Melos was proscribed for atheism, he having declared that the non-punishment of a certain act of iniquity proved that there were no Gods.⁴ It has been surmised, with some reason, that the iniquity in question was the slaughter of the Melians by the Athenians in 416 B.C.⁵ For some time after 415, the Athenian courts made strenuous efforts to punish every discoverable case of impiety ; and parodies of the Eleusinian mysteries (resembling the mock Masses of Catholic Europe) were alleged against Alkibiades and others.⁶ Diagoras, who was further charged with divulging the Eleusinian and other mysteries, and with making fire-

¹ Diogenes Laërtius, B. ix, c. viii, § 3 (51) ; cp. Grote, vii, 49, *note*.

² For a defence of Protagoras against Plato, see Grote, vii, 43–54.

³ Beckmann, *History of Inventions*, Eng. trans., 1846, ii, 513.

⁴ Diod. Sic., xiii, 6 ; Hesychius, cit. in Cudworth, ed. Harrison, i, 131.

⁵ Ueberweg, i, 80 ; Thukydides, v, 116.

⁶ Grote, vi, 13, 32, 33, 42–45.

wood of an image of Herakles, telling the God thus to perform his thirteenth labour by cooking turnips,¹ became thenceforth one of the proverbial atheists of the ancient world,² and a reward of a silver talent was offered for killing him, and of two talents for his capture alive;³ despite which he seems to have escaped. But no antidote to the bane of fanaticism was found or sought; and the most famous publicist in Athens was the next victim.

The fatality of the Athenian development is seen not only in the direct hostility of the people to rational thought, but in their loss of their hold even on their public polity. For lack of political judgment, moved always by the passions which their literary culture cherished, they so mishandled their affairs in the long and demoralising Peloponnesian war that they were at one time cowed by their own aristocracy, on essentially absurd pretexts, into abandoning the democratic constitution. Its restoration was followed at the final crisis by another tyranny, also short-lived but abnormally bloody and iniquitous; and though the people at its overthrow showed a moderation in remarkable contrast to the cruelty and rapacity of the aristocrats, the effect of such extreme vicissitude was to increase the total disposition towards civic violence and coercion. And while the people menaced freethinking in religion, the aristocracies opposed freethinking in politics. Thus under the Thirty Tyrants all intellectual teaching was forbidden; and Kritias, himself accused of having helped Alcibiades to parody the mysteries, sharply interdicted the political rationalism of Sokrates,⁴ who according to tradition had been one of his own instructors.

¹ Athenagoras, *Apol.*, c. 4; Clem. Alex., *Protrept.* c. 2. See the documentary details in Meyer, iv, 105.

² Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 1, 23, 42; iii, 37 (the last reference gives proof of his general rationalism); Lactantius, *De ira Dei*, c. 9. In calling Sokrates "the Melian," Aristophanes (*Clouds*, 830) was held to have virtually called him "the atheist."

³ Diod., xiii, 6; Suidas, s.v. DIAGORAS; Aristophanes, *Birds*, 1073. It is noteworthy that in their fury against Diagoras the Athenians put him on a level of common odium with the "tyrants" of past history. Cp. Burckhardt, *Griechische Culturgeschichte*, i, 355.

⁴ Grote, vi, 476-7.

It was a result of the general movement of mind throughout the rest of the Hellenic world that free-thinkers of culture were still numerous. ARCHELAOS of Miletos, the most important disciple of Anaxagoras; according to a late tradition, the master of Sokrates; and the first systematic teacher of Ionic physical science in Athens, taught the infinity of the universe, grasped the explanation of the nature of sound, and set forth on purely rationalistic lines the social origin and basis of morals, thus giving Sokrates his practical lead.¹ Another disciple of Anaxagoras, METRODOROS of Lampsakos (not to be confounded with Metrodoros of Chios, and the other Metrodoros of Lampsakos who was the friend of Epicurus, both also freethinkers), carried out zealously his master's teaching as to the deities and heroes of Homer, resolving them into mere elemental combinations and physical agencies, and making Zeus stand for mind, and Athenê for art.² And in the *belles lettres* of Athens itself, in the dramas of EURIPIDES, who is said to have been the ardent disciple of Anaxagoras,³ to have studied Herakleitos,⁴ and to have been the friend of Sokrates and Protagoras, there emerge traces enough of a rationalism not to be reconciled with the old belief in the Gods. If Euripides has nowhere ventured on such a terrific paradox as the *Prometheus*, he has in a score of passages revealed a stress of skepticism which, inasmuch as he too uses all the forms of Hellenic faith, deepens our doubt as to the beliefs of Æschylus. Euripides even gave overt proof of his unbelief, beginning his *Melanippe* with the line: "Zeus, whoever Zeus be, for I know not, save by report," an audacity which evoked a great uproar. In a later production the pas-

¹ Diog. Laërt., B. ii, c. iv; Hippolytos, *Refutation of all Heresies*, i, 8; Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 233-7.

² Cp. Cudworth, *Intellectual System*, ed. Harrison, i, 32; Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 233, 289; ii, 268, 292; Tatian, *Adv. Græcos*, c. 48 (31); Diog. Laërt., B. ii, c. iii, 7 (§ 11); Grote, i, 374, 395, *note*; Hatch, *Infl. of Greek Ideas*, p. 60.

³ Haigh, *Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, p. 206. Cp. Burnett, p. 278.

⁴ Diog. Laërt., B. ii (§ 22).

sage was prudently altered ;¹ but he never put much check on his native tendency to analyse and criticise on all issues—a tendency fostered, as we have seen,² by the constant example of real and poignant dialectic in the Athenian dikastery, and the whole drift of the Athenian stage. In his case the tendency even overbalances the artistic process ;³ but it has the advantage of involving a very bold handling of vital problems. Not satisfied with a merely dramatic presentment of lawless Gods, Euripides makes his characters impeach them as such,⁴ or, again, declare that there can be no truth in the “miserable tales of poets” which so represent them.⁵ Not content with putting aside as idle such a fable as that of the sun’s swerving from his course in horror at the crime of Atreus,⁶ and that of the Judgment of Paris,⁷ he attacks with a stringent scorn the whole apparatus of oracles, divination, and soothsaying.⁸ And if the Athenian populace cried out at the hardy opening of the *Melanippe*, he nonetheless gave them again and again his opinion that no man knew anything of the Gods.⁹ As regards his constructive opinions, we have from him many expressions of the pantheism which had by his time permeated the thought of nearly all educated Greeks.¹⁰

Here again, as in the case of Æschylus, there arises the problem of contradiction ; for Euripides, too, puts often in the mouths of his characters emphatic expressions of customary piety. The conclusion in the two cases must be broadly the same—that whereas an

¹ Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, 1889, p. 316.

² Above, p. 135.

³ “He had also acquired in no small degree that love of dexterous argumentation and verbal sophistry which was becoming fashionable in the Athens of the fifth century. Not unfrequently he exhibits this dexterity when it is clearly out of place.” Haigh, *The Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, 1896, p. 235. Schlegel is much more censorious.

⁴ *Ion*, 436-451, 885-922 ; *Andromache*, 1161-1165 ; *Electra*, 1245-6, *Hercules Furens*, 339-347 ; *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 35, 711-715.

⁵ *Hercules Furens*, 1341-1346 ; *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 380-391.

⁶ *Electra*, 737-745.

⁷ *Troades*, 969-990.

⁸ *Ion*, 685 ; *Helena*, 744-757 ; *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 570-575.

⁹ *Philoctetes*, fr. 793 ; *Helena*, 1137-1143 ; *Bellerophon*, fr. 288.

¹⁰ *Helena*, 1013 ; *Fragm.* 890, 905, 935 ; *Troades*, 848-888.

unbelieving dramatist may well make his characters talk in the ordinary way of deity and of religion, it is unintelligible that a believing one should either go beyond the artistic bounds of his task to make them utter an unbelief which must have struck the average listener as strange and noxious, or construct a drama of which the whole effect is to insist on the odiousness of the action of the Supreme God. And the real drift of Euripides is so plain that one modern and Christian scholar has denounced him as an obnoxious and unbelieving sophist who abused his opportunity as a producer of dramas under religious auspices to "shake the ground-works of religion"¹ and at the same time of morals;² while another and a greater scholar, less vehement in his orthodoxy, more restrainedly condemns the dramatist for employing myths in which he did not believe, instead of inventing fresh plots.³ Finally, the recognition of Euripides' freethinking has led to the description of him as "Euripides the Rationalist," in a treatise which represents him as a systematic assailant of the religion of his day. Abating somewhat of that thesis, which imputes more of system to the Euripidean drama than it possesses, we may sum up that the last of the great tragedians of Athens, and the most human and lovable of the three, was assuredly a rationalist in matters of religion. It is noteworthy that he used more frequently than any other ancient dramatist the device of a *deus ex machina* to end a play.⁴ It was because for him the conception had no serious significance.

Dr. Verrall's *Euripides the Rationalist*, 1897, is fairly summed up by Mr. Haigh (*Tragic Drama of the Greeks*,

¹ A. Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Literature*, Bohn trans., p. 117.

² This charge is on a par with that of Hygiainon, who accused Euripides of impiety on the score that one of his characters makes light of oaths. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, iii, 15.

³ K. O. Müller, *Hist. of the Lit. of Anc. Greece*, 1847, p. 359. The complaint is somewhat surprising from such a source. The only play with an entirely invented plot mentioned in Euripides' day is Agathon's *Flower*; and such plays would not have been eligible for representation at the great festivals.

⁴ Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, p. 191.

pp. 262, 265, *notes*):—"He considers that Euripides was a skeptic of the aggressive type, whose principal object in writing tragedy was to attack the State religion, but who, perceiving that it would be dangerous to pose as an open enemy, endeavoured to accomplish his ends by covert ridicule....His plays... contain in reality two separate plots—the ostensible and superficial plot, which was intended to satisfy the orthodox, and the rationalised modification which lay half concealed beneath it, and which the intelligent skeptic would easily detect." For objections to this thesis see Haigh, as cited, and Dr. Mozley's article in the *Classical Review*, Nov., 1895, pp. 407-413. As to the rationalism of Euripides in general see many of the passages cited by Bishop Westcott in his *Essays in the Hist. of Relig. Thought in the West*, 1891, pp. 102-127. And cp. Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*, pp. 46-49; Grote, *Hist.*, i, 346-8; Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, Eng. trans., 3rd ed. p. 231; Murray, *Ancient Greek Literature*, pp. 256, 264-6.

But while Euripides must thus have made a special appeal to the reflecting few even in his own day, it is clear that he was not at first popular with the many; and his efforts, whatever he may have hoped to achieve, could not suffice to enlighten the democracy. The ribald blasphemies of his enemy, the believing Aristophanes, could avail more to keep vulgar religion in credit than the tragedian's serious indictment could effect against it; and they served at the same time to belittle Euripides for the multitude in his own day. The Athenian faith, as a Catholic scholar remarks,¹ "was more disposed to suffer the buffooneries of a comedian than the serious negation of a philosopher." The average Greek seemed to think that jocular impiety did no harm, where serious negation might cause divine wrath.² And so there came no intellectual salvation for Athens from the drama which was her unique achievement. The balance of ignorance and culture was not changed. The people remained politically unwise and religiously superstitious, the social

¹ Girard, *Essai sur Thucydide*, 1884, pp. 258-9.

² Cp. Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, p. 315. In the same way Ktesilochos, the pupil of Apelles, could with impunity make Zeus ridiculous by exhibiting him pictorially in childbed, bringing forth Dionysos (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxv, 40, § 15).

struggle perpetuating the division between leisure and toil, even apart from the life of the mass of slaves; while the eternal pre-occupation of militarism left even the majority of the upper class at the intellectual level natural to military life in all ages. There came, however, a generation of great intellectual splendour following on that of the supreme development of drama just before the fall of Greek freedom. Athens had at last come into the heritage of Greek philosophic thought; and to the utterance of that crowning generation the human retrospect has turned ever since. This much of renown remains inalienable from the most renowned democracy of the ancient world.

§ 8.

The wide subject of the teaching of SOKRATES, PLATO, and ARISTOTLE must here be noticed briefly, with a view only to our special inquiry. All three must be inscribed in any list of ancient freethinkers; and yet all three furthered freethought only indirectly, the two former being in different degrees supernaturalists, while the last touched on religious questions only as a philosopher, avoiding all question of practical innovation.

The same account holds good of the best of the so-called Sophists, as GORGIAS the Sicilian (? 485-380), who was a nihilistic skeptic; HIPPIAS of Elis, who impugned the political laws and prejudices which estranged men of thought and culture; and PRODIKOS of Cos (fl. 435), author of the fable of Herakles at the Parting of the Ways, who seems to have privately criticised the current Gods as mere deifications of useful things and forces, and was later misconceived as teaching that the things and forces were Gods. Cp. Cicero, *De nat. Deorum*, i, 42; Ueberweg, vol. i, p. 78; Renouvier, i, 291-3.

1. SOKRATES [468-399] was fundamentally and practically a freethinker in that in all things he thought for himself, definitely turning away from the old ideal of mere transmitted authority in morals.¹ Starting in all

¹ Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, Eng. trans., 3rd ed., p. 227; Hegel, as there cited; Grote, *Plato*, ed. 1885, i, 423.

inquiries from a position of professed ignorance, he at least repudiated all dogmatics.¹ Being, however, pre-occupied with public life and conduct, he did not carry his critical thinking far beyond that sphere. In regard to the extension of solid science, one of the prime necessities of Greek intellectual life, he was quite reactionary, drawing a line between the phenomena which he thought intelligible and traceable and those which he thought past finding out. "Physics and astronomy, in his opinion, belonged to the divine class of phenomena in which human research was insane, fruitless, and impious."² Yet at the same time he formulated, apparently of his own motion, the ordinary design argument.³ The sound scientific view led up to by so many previous thinkers was set forth, even in religious phraseology, by his great contemporary Hippokrates,⁴ and he opposed it. While separating himself in practice from the popular worships, he held by the belief in omens, though not in all the ordinary ones; and in one of the Platonic dialogues he is made to say he holds by the ordinary versions of all the myths, on the ground that it is an endless task to find rational explanations for them.⁵ He hoped, in short, to rationalise conduct without seeking first to rationalise creed—the dream of Plato and of a thousand religionists since.

Taken as illustrating the state of thought in the Athenian community, the trial and execution of Sokrates for "blasphemy" and "corrupting the minds of the young" go far to prove, however, that there prevailed in Athens nearly as much hypocrisy in religious matters as exists in the England of to-day. Doubtless he was liable to death from the traditionally orthodox Greek

¹ Cp. Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics*, 1881, i, 181 sq, and pp. 291, 293, 299, etc.

² Grote, *History*, i, 334; Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, i, 1, §§ 6-9.

³ Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, i, 4. Cp. Benn, *The Philosophy of the Greeks*, 1898, p. 160.

⁴ Grote, i, 334-5; Hippokrates, *De Aeribus, Aquis, Locis*, c. 22 (49).

⁵ Plato, *Phaedrus*, Jowett's trans., 3rd ed., i, 434; Grote, *History*, i, 393.

point of view,¹ having practically turned aside from the old civic creed and ideals; but then most educated Athenians had in some degree done the same.² Euripides, as we have seen, is so frequently critical of the old theology and mythology in his plays that he too could easily have been indicted; and Aristophanes, who attacked Euripides in his comedies as unscrupulously as he did Sokrates, would no doubt have been glad to see him prosecuted.³ The psychology of Aristophanes, who freely ridiculed and blasphemed the Gods in his own comedies while reviling all men who did not believe in them, is hardly intelligible save in the light of parts of the English history of our own time, when unbelieving indifferentists on the Conservative side have been seen ready to join in turning the law against a freethinking publicist for purely party ends. Indeed, in the case of Sokrates, not only party malice, but the individual dislikes he so industriously set up,⁴ must have counted for much in securing the small majority of the dikastery that pronounced him guilty; and his own clear preference for death over any sort of compromise did the rest.⁵ He was old, and little hopeful of social betterment; and the temperamental obstinacy which underlay his perpetual and pertinacious debating helped him to choose a death that he could easily have avoided. But the fact remains that he was not popular;

¹ Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, as cited, p. 231. The case against Sokrates is bitterly urged by Forchhammer, *Die Athenen und Sokrates*, 1837; see in particular pp. 8-11. Cp. Grote, *Hist.*, vii, 81.

² "Had not all the cultivated men of the time passed through a school of rationalism which had entirely pulled to pieces the beliefs and the morals of their ancestors?" Zeller, as last cited, pp. 231-3. Cp. Haigh, *Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, p. 261.

³ See Aristophanes' *Frogs*, 888-894.

⁴ "Nothing could well be more unpopular and obnoxious than the task which he undertook of cross-examining and convicting of ignorance every distinguished man whom he could approach." Grote, vii, 95. Cp. pp. 141-144. Cp. also Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*, ed. 1881, p. 316; and Renouvier, *Manuel de la philosophie ancienne*, l. iv, § iii. For a very interesting view of Sokrates' relations to his chief accuser, see Professor Murray's *Ancient Greek Literature*, pp. 176-7. There is a good monograph by H. Bleckly, *Socrates and the Athenians: An Apology*, 1884, which holds the balances fairly.

⁵ On the desire of Sokrates to die, see Grote, vii, 152-164.

that the mass of the voters as well as of the upper class disliked his constant cross-examination of popular opinion, which must often have led logical listeners to carry on criticism where he left off; and that after all his ratiocination he left Athens substantially irrational on some essential issues. His dialectic method has done more to educate the later world than it did for Greece. But in view of his own limitations, it is not surprising that through all Greek history educated men (including Aristotle) continued to believe firmly in the deluge of Deukalion¹ and the invasion of the Amazons² as solid historical facts.

Such beliefs, of course, are on all fours with those current in the modern religious world down till the present century: we shall, in fact, best appraise the rationality of Greece by making such comparisons. The residual lesson is that where Greek reason ended, modern social science had better be regarded as only beginning. THUKYDIDES, the greatest of all the ancient historians, and one of the great of all time, treated human affairs in a spirit so strictly rationalistic that he might reasonably be termed an atheist on that score even if he had not earned the name as a pupil of Anaxagoras.³ But his task was to chronicle a war which proved that the Greeks were to the last children of instinct for the main purposes of life, and that the rule of reason which they are credited with establishing⁴ was only an intermittent pastime.

2. The decisive measure of Greek accomplishment is found in the career of PLATO [429–347]. One of the great prose writers of the world, he has won by his literary genius—that is, by his power of continuous presentation as well as by his style—no less than by his

¹ Grote, *History*, i, 94.

² *Id.* i, 194. Not till Strabo do we find this myth disbelieved; and Strabo was surprised to find most men holding by the old story while admitting that the race of Amazons had died out. *Id.* p. 197.

³ Life of Thukydides, by Marcellinus, c. 22, citing Antyllas. Cp. Girard, *Essai sur Thucydide*, p. 239; and the prefaces of Hobbes and Smith to their translations.

⁴ Girard, p. 3.

service to supernaturalist philosophy in general, a repute above his deserts as a thinker. In Christian history he is the typical philosopher of Dualism,¹ his prevailing conception of the universe being that of an inert Matter acted on or even created by a craftsman-God, the "Divine Artificer," sometimes conceived as a *Logos* or divine Reason, separately personalised. Thus he came to be *par excellence* the philosopher of theism, as against Aristotle and those of the Pythagoreans who affirmed the eternity of the universe.² In the history of freethought he figures as a man of genius formed by Sokrates and reflecting his limitations, developing the Sokratic dialectic on the one hand and finally emphasising the Sokratic dogmatism to the point of utter bigotry. If the Athenians are to be condemned for putting Sokrates to death, it must not be forgotten that the spirit, if not the letter, of the *Laws* drawn up by Plato in his old age fully justified them.³ That code, could it ever have been put in force, would have wrought the death of every honest freethinker as well as most of the ignorant believers within its sphere. Alone among the great serious writers of Greece does he implicate Greek thought in the gospel of intolerance passed on to modern Europe from antiquity. It is recorded of him⁴ that he wished to burn all the writings of Demokritos that he could collect, and was dissuaded only on the score of the number of the copies.

What was best in Plato, considered as a freethinker, was his early love of ratiocination, of "the rendering and receiving of reasons." Even in his earlier dialogues, however, there are signs enough of an arbitrary temper,

¹ "His writings," remarks Dr. Hatch, "contain the seeds of nearly all that afterwards grew up on Christian soil" (*Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, 1890, p. 182).

² Clem. Alex., *Stromata*, v, 14; Fairbanks, pp. 146-7; Grote, *Plato*, ch. 38.

³ Cp. Grote, *Plato*, iv, 162, 381. Professor Bain, however (*Practical Essays*, 1884, p. 273), raises an interesting question by his remark, as to the death of Sokrates: "The first person to feel the shock was Plato. That he was affected by it to the extent of suppressing his views on the higher questions we can infer with the greatest probability. Aristotle was equally cowed."

⁴ Diog. Laërt., B. ix, c. vii, § 8 (40).

as well as of an inability to put science in place of religious prejudice. The obscurantist doctrine which he put in the mouth of Sokrates in the *Phaedrus* was also his own, as we gather from the exposition in the *Republic*. In that brilliant performance he objects, as so many believers and freethinkers had done before him, to the scandalous tales in the poets concerning the Gods and the sons of Gods; but he does not object to them as being untrue. His position is that they are unedifying.¹ For his own part he proposes to frame new myths which shall edify the young: in his Utopia it is part of the business of the legislator to frame or choose the right fictions;² and the systematic imposition of an edifying body of pious fable on the general intelligence is part of his scheme for the regeneration of society.³ Honesty is to be built up by fraud, and reason by delusion. What the Hebrew Bible-makers actually did, Plato proposed to do. The one thing to be said in his favour is that by thus telling how the net is to be spread in the sight of the bird he put the decisive obstacle—if any were needed—in the way of his plan. It is, indeed, inconceivable that the author of the *Republic* and the *Laws* dreamt that either polity as a whole would ever come into existence. He had failed completely as a statesman in practice:⁴ as a

¹ *Republic*, B. ii and iii; Jowett's trans., 3rd ed., iii, 60 sq., 68 sq. In B. x, it is true, he does speak of the poets as unqualified by knowledge and training to teach truth (Jowett's trans., iii, 311 sq.); but Plato's "truth" is not objective but idealistic, or rather fictitious-didactic.

² *Id.* B. ii and iii; Jowett, pp. 59; 69, etc.

³ *Id.* B. iii; Jowett, pp. 103-105.

⁴ See the story of his and his pupils' attempts at Syracuse (Grote, *History*, ix, 37-123). The younger Dionysios, whom they had vainly attempted to make a model ruler, seems to have been an audacious unbeliever to the extent of plundering the temple of Persephone at Locris, one of Jupiter in the Peloponnesos, and one of Æsculapius at Epidaurus. Clement of Alexandria (*Protrept.* c. 4) states that he plundered "the statue of Jupiter in Sicily." Cicero (*De nat. Deorum*, iii, 33, 34) and Valerius Maximus (i, 1) tell the story of the elder Dionysios; but of him it cannot be true. In his day the plunder of the temples of Démêtêr and Persephone in Sicily by the Carthaginians was counted a deadly sin. See Freeman, *History of Sicily*, iv, 125-147, and *Story of Sicily*, pp. 176-180. In Cicero's dialogue it is noted that after all his impieties Dionysios [the elder, of whom the stories are mistakenly told] died in his bed. Athenæus, however, citing the biographer Clearchos, tells that the younger Dionysios, after being reduced to the rôle of a begging priest of Cybelê, ended his life very miserably (xii, 60).

schemer he does not even posit the first conditions of success.

Nonetheless, the prescription of intolerance in the *Laws*¹ classes Plato finally on the side of fanaticism, and indeed ranks him with the most sinister figures on that side, since his earlier writing shows that he would be willing to punish men for rejecting what he knew to be untruths.² His psychology is as strange as that of Aristophanes, but strange with a difference. He seems to have practised "the will to believe" till he grew to be a fanatic on the plane of the most ignorant of orthodox Athenians; and after all that science had done to enlighten men on that natural order the misconceiving of which had been the foundation of their creeds, he inveighs furiously in his old age against the impiety of those who dared to doubt that the sun and moon and stars were deities, as every nurse taught her charges.³ And when all is said, his Gods satisfy no need of the intelligence, for he insists that they only partially rule the world, sending the few good things but not the many evil⁴—save in so far as evil may be a beneficent penalty and discipline. At the same time, while advising the imprisonment or execution of heretics who did not believe in the Gods, Plato regarded with even greater detestation the man who taught that they could be persuaded or propitiated by individual prayer and sacrifice.⁵ Thus he would have struck alike at the freethinking few and at the multitude who held by the general religious beliefs of Greece, dealing damnation on all save his own clique, in a way that would have made Torquemada blench.⁶ In the face of such teaching as this, it may well be said that "Greek philosophy made incomparably greater advances in the earlier polemic period [of the Ionians] than after

¹ *Laws*, x; Jowett, v, 295-298.

² *Republic*, ii, iii, as cited. Cp. *Laws*, ii, iii; Jowett, v, 42, 79.

³ *Laws*, Jowett's trans., 3rd ed., v, 271-2. Compare the comment of Benn, i, 271-2.

⁴ *Republic*, B. ii; Jowett, iii, 62.

⁵ *Laws*, x, 906-7, 910; Jowett, v, 293-4, 297-8.

⁶ On the general inconsistency of the whole doctrine see Grote's *Plato*, iv, 379-397.

its friendly return to the poetry of Homer and Hesiod"¹—that is, to their polytheistic basis. It is to be said for Plato finally that his embitterment at the downward course of things in Athens is a quite intelligible source for his own intellectual decadence: a very similar spectacle being seen in the case of our own great modern Utopist, Sir Thomas More. But Plato's own writing bears witness that among the unbelievers against whom he declaimed there were wise and blameless citizens;² while in the act of seeking to lay a religious basis for a good society he admitted the fundamental immorality of the religious basis of the whole of past Greek life.

3. Of ARISTOTLE [384–322] it may here suffice to say that like Sokrates he rendered rather an indirect than a direct service to Freethought. Where Sokrates gave the critical or dialectic method or habit, "a process of eternal value and of universal application,"³ Aristotle supplied the great inspiration of system, partly correcting the Sokratic dogmatism on the possibilities of science by endless observation and speculation, though himself falling into scientific dogmatism only too often. That he was an unbeliever in the popular and Platonic religion is clear. Apart from the general rationalistic tenor of his works,⁴ there was a current understanding that the Peripatetic school denied the utility of prayer and sacrifice;⁵ and though the attempt of the anti-Macedonian party to impeach him for impiety may have turned largely on his hyperbolic hymn to his dead friend Hermeias (who was a eunuch, and as such held

¹ Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philos.*, Eng. trans., i, 25. Cp. Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, i, 38–39 (trans. i, 52–54). See, however, Mr. Benn's final eulogy of Plato as a thinker, i, 273, and Professor Murray's, *Anc. Greek Lit.*, pp. 311–313, and the remarkable verdict of Bacon (*De Augmentis*, B. iii, c. 4: *Works*, 1-vol. ed. 1905, p. 471; cp. *Advancement of Learning*, B. ii, p. 96) as to the superiority of the natural philosophy of Democritus over those of Plato and Aristotle. Bacon immediately qualifies his verdict; but he repeats it, as regards both Aristotle and Plato, in the *Novum Organum*, B. i, Aph. 96.

² *Laws*, x, 908; Jowett, v, 295.

³ Grote, *History*, vii, 168.

⁴ Cp. Grote, *Aristotle*, 2nd ed., p. 10.

⁵ Origen, *Against Celsus*, ii, 13; cp. i, 65; iii, 75; vii, 3.

peculiarly unworthy of being addressed as on a level with semi-divine heroes¹), it could hardly have been undertaken at all unless he had given solider pretexts. The threatened prosecution he avoided by leaving the city, dying shortly afterwards. The prosecution for blasphemy had now become a recognised weapon in politics for all who had more piety than principle, and perhaps for some who had neither.

Professor Bain (*Practical Essays*, p. 273), citing Grote's remark on the "cautious prose compositions of Aristotle," comments thus: "That is to say, the execution of Sokrates was always before his eyes; he had to pare his expressions so as not to give offence to Athenian orthodoxy. We can never know the full bearings of such a disturbing force. The editors of Aristotle complain of the corruption of his text: a far worse corruption lies behind. In Greece Sokrates alone had the courage of his opinions. While his views as to a future life, for example, are plain and frank, the real opinion of Aristotle on the question is an insoluble problem." (See, however, the passage in the *Metaphysics* cited below.)

The opinion of Grote and Bain as to Aristotle's caution is fully coincided in by Lange, who writes (*Geschichte des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i, 63): "More conservative than Plato and Sokrates, Aristotle everywhere seeks to attach himself as closely as possible to tradition, to popular notions, to the ideas embodied in common speech, and his ethical postulates diverge as little as may be from the customary morals and laws of Greek States. He has therefore been at all times the favourite philosopher of conservative schools and movements."

It is clear, nevertheless, if we can be sure of his writings, that he was a monotheist, but a monotheist with no practical religion. "Excluding such a thing as divine interference with nature, his theology, of course, excludes the possibility of revelation, inspiration, miracles, and grace."² In a passage in the *Metaphysics*, after elaborating his monistic conception of Nature, he dismisses in one or two terse sentences the whole current

¹ Grote, *Aristotle*, p. 13.

² Benn, *The Greek Philosophers*, i, 352. Mr. Benn refutes Sir A. Grant's view that Aristotle's creed was a "vague pantheism"; but that phrase loosely conveys the idea of its non-religiousness, so to speak. It might be called a Lucretian monotheism. Cp. Benn, i, 294.

religion as a mass of myth framed to persuade the multitude, in the interest of law and order.¹ His influence must thus have been to some extent, at least, favourable to rational science, though unhappily his own science is too often a blundering reaction against the surmises of earlier thinkers with a greater gift of intuition than he, who was rather a methodiser than a discoverer.² What was worst in his doctrine was its tendency to apriorism, which made it in a later age so adaptable to the purposes of the Roman Catholic Church. For the rest, while guiltless of Plato's fanaticism, he had no scheme of reform whatever, and was as far as any other Greek from the thought of raising the mass by instruction. His own science, indeed, was not progressive; and his political ideals were rather reactionary; his clear perception of the nature of the population problem leaving him in the earlier attitude of Malthus, and his lack of sympathetic energy making him a defender of slavery when other men had condemned it.³ He was in some aspects the greatest brain of the ancient world; and he left it, at the close of the great Grecian period, without much faith in man, while positing for the modern world its vague conception of Deity.

The lack of fresh science, which was the proximate cause of the stagnation of Greek thought, has been explained like other things as a result of race qualities: "the Athenians," says Mr. Benn (*The Greek Philosophers*, i, 42), "had no genius for natural science: none of them were ever distinguished as savans.....It was, they thought, a miserable trifling [and] waste

¹ *Metaphysics*, xi (xii), 8, 13 (p. 1074, b). The passage is so stringent as to raise the question how he came to run the risk in this one case. It was probably a late writing, and he may have taken it for granted that the *Metaphysics* would never be read by the orthodox.

² Cp. the severe criticisms of Benn, vol. i, ch. 6; Berry, *A Short History of Astronomy*, p. 33; and Lange, *Ges. des Materialismus*, i, 61-68, and notes, citing Eucken and Cuvier. Aristotle's science is very much on a par with that of Bacon, who saw his imperfections, but fell into the same kinds of error. Both insisted on an inductive method; and both transgressed from it. See, however, Lange's summary, p. 69, also p. 7, as to the unfairness of Whewell; and ch. v of Soury's *Bréviaire de l'histoire du Matérialisme*, 1881, especially *end*.

³ *Politics*, i, 2.

of time.....Pericles, indeed, thought differently....." On the other hand, Lange decides (i, 6) that "with the freedom and boldness of the Hellenic spirit was combined.....the talent for scientific deduction." These contrary views seem alike arbitrary. If Mr. Benn means that other Hellenes had what the Athenians lacked, the answer is that only special social conditions could have set up such a difference, and that it could not be innate, but must be a mere matter of usage. The Chaldeans were forward in astronomy because their climate favoured it to begin with, and religion and their superstitions did so later. Hippokrates of Cos became a great physician because, with natural capacity, he had the opportunity to compare many practices. The Athenians failed to carry on the sciences not because the faculty or the taste was lacking among them (Perikles cannot have been alone in his attitude; and the "miserable trifling" must, in the terms of the case, have been done by some native Athenians as well as by immigrants) but because their political and artistic interests, for one thing, preoccupied them—*e.g.*, Sokrates and Plato; and because, for another, their popular religion, popularly supported, menaced the students of physics. But the Ionians, who *had* savans, failed equally to progress after the Alexandrian period; the explanation being again not stoppage of faculty but the advent of conditions unfavourable to the old intellectual life, which in any case, as we saw, had been first set up by Babylonian contacts. On the "faculty" theory, we should have to decide that somehow all the Hellenes with such a faculty had happened to go to Ionia or Sicily. (Compare, on the ethnological theorem of Cousin, Guillaume Bréton, *Essai sur la poésie philosophique en Grèce*, 1882, p. 10.) On the other hand, Lange's theory of gifts "innate" in the Hellenic mind in general merely reverses the fallacy. Potentialities are "innate" in all populations, according to their culture stage, and it was their total environment that specialised the Greeks as a community.

§ 9.

The overthrow of the "free" political life of Athens was followed by a certain increase in intellectual activity, the result of throwing back the remaining store of energy on the life of the mind. By this time an almost open unbelief as to the current tales concerning the Gods would seem to have become general among educated people, the withdrawal of the old risk of impeachment

by political factions being so far favourable to outspokenness. It is on record that the historian EPHOROS (of Cumæ in Æolia: fl. 350 B.C.), who was a pupil of Isokrates, openly hinted in his work at his disbelief in the oracle of Apollo, and in fabulous traditions generally.¹ In other directions there were similar signs of free-thought. The new schools of philosophy founded by ZENO the Stoic (fl. 280: d. 263 or 259) and EPICURUS (341-270), whatever their defects, compare not ill with those of Plato and Aristotle, exhibiting greater ethical sanity and sincerity if less metaphysical subtlety. Of metaphysics there had been enough for the age: what it needed was a rational philosophy of life. But the loss of political freedom, although thus for a time turned to account, was fatal to continuous progress. The first great thinkers had all been free men in a politically free environment: the atmosphere of cowed subjection, especially after the advent of the Romans, could not breed their like; and originative energy of the higher order soon disappeared. Sane as was the moral philosophy of Epicurus, and austere as was that of Zeno, they are alike static or quietist,² the codes of a society seeking a regulating and sustaining principle rather than hopeful of new achievement or new truth. And the universal skepticism of PYRRHO has the same effect of suggesting that what is wanted is not progress, but balance. It is significant that he, who carried the Sokratic profession of Nescience to the typical extreme of doctrinal Nihilism, was made high-priest of his native town of Elis, and had statues erected in his honour.³

¹ Strabo, B. ix, c. iii, § 11. Strabo reproaches Ephorus with repeating the current legends all the same; but it seems clear that he anticipated the critical tactic of Gibbon.

² As to the Stoics, cp. Zeller, § 34, 4; Benn, *The Philosophy of Greece*, pp. 255-6. As to Epicurus, cp. Benn, p. 261.

³ Diog. Laërt., B. ix. c. xi, 5 (§ 64). The lengthy notice given by Diogenes shows the impression Pyrrho's teaching made. See a full account of it, so far as known, in the Rev. J. Owen's *Evenings with the Sceptics*, 1881, i, 287 sq., and the monograph of Zimmerman, there cited.

Considered as freethinkers, all three men tell at once of the critical and of the reactionary work done by the previous age. Pyrrho, the universal doubter, appears to have taken for granted, with the whole of his followers, such propositions as that some animals (not insects) are produced by parthenogenesis, that some live in the fire, and that the legend of the Phoenix is true.¹ Such credences stood for the arrest of biological science in the Sokratic age, with Aristotle, so often mistakenly, at work; while, on the other hand, the Sokratic scepticism visibly motives the play of systematic doubt on the dogmas men had learned to question. Zeno, again, was substantially a monotheist; Epicurus, adopting but not greatly developing the science of Demokritos,² turned the Gods into a far-off band of glorious spectres, untroubled by human needs, dwelling for ever in immortal calm, neither ruling nor caring to rule the world of men.³ In coming to this surprising compromise, Epicurus, indeed, probably did not carry with him the whole intelligence even of his own school. His friend, the second Metrodoros of Lampsakos, seems to have been the most stringent of all the censors of Homer, wholly ignoring his namesake's attempts to clear the bard of impiety. "He even advised men not to be ashamed to confess their utter ignorance of Homer, to the extent of not knowing whether Hektor was a Greek or a Trojan."⁴ Such austerity towards myths

¹ These propositions occur in the first of the ten Pyrrhonian *tropoi* or modes (Diog. Laërt., B. ix, c. xi, 9) of which the authorship is commonly assigned to Ænesidemus (fl. 80-50). Cp. Owen, *Evenings with the Sceptics*, i, 290, 322-3. But as given by Diogenes they seem to derive from the early Pyrrhonian school.

² Thus, where Demokritos pronounced the sun to be of vast size, Epicurus held it to be no larger than it seemed (Cicero, *De Finibus*, i, 6) —a view also loosely ascribed to Herakleitos (Diog. Laërt., B. ix, c. i, 6, § 7). See, however, Wallace's *Epicureanism* ("Ancient Philosophies" series), 1889, pp. 176 sq., 186 sq., p. 266, as to the scientific merits of the system.

³ The Epicurean doctrine on this and other heads is chiefly to be gathered from the great poem of Lucretius. Professor Wallace's excellent treatise gives all the clues. See p. 202 as to the Epicurean God-idea.

⁴ Grote, *History*, i, 395, note; Plutarch, *Non posse suaviter vivi sec. Epicur.*

can hardly have been compatible with the acceptance of the residuum of Epicurus. That, however, became the standing creed of the sect, and a fruitful theme of derision to its opponents. Doubtless the comfort of avoiding direct conflict with the popular beliefs had a good deal to do with the acceptance of the doctrine.

This strange retention of the theorem of the existence of anthropomorphic Gods, with a flat denial that they did anything in the universe, might be termed the great peculiarity of average ancient rationalism, were it not that what makes it at all intelligible for us is just the similar practice of modern non-Christian theists. The Gods of antiquity were non-creative, but strivers and meddlers and answerers of prayer; and ancient rationalism relieved them of their striving and meddling, leaving them no active or governing function whatever, but for the most part cherishing their phantasms. The God of modern Christendom had been at once a creator and a governor, ruling, meddling, punishing, rewarding, and hearing prayer; and modern theism, unable to take the atheistic or agnostic plunge, relieves him of all interference in things human or cosmic, but retains him as a creative abstraction who somehow set up "law," whether or not he made all things out of nothing. The psychological process in the two cases seems to be the same—an erection of æsthetic habit into a philosophic dogma, and an accommodation of phrase to popular prejudice.

Whatever may have been the logical and psychological crudities of Epicureanism, however, it counted for much as a deliverance to men from superstitious fears; and nothing is more remarkable in the history of ancient philosophy than the affectionate reverence paid to the founder's memory¹ on this score through whole centuries. The powerful Lucretius sounds his highest note of praise in telling how this Greek had first of all men freed human life from the crushing load of religion, daring to pass the

¹ Compare Wallace, *Epicureanism*, pp. 64-71, and ch. xi; and Mackintosh, *On the Progress of Ethical Philosophy*, 4th ed., p. 29.

flaming ramparts of the world, and by his victory putting men on an equality with heaven.¹ The laughter-loving Lucian two hundred years later grows gravely eloquent on the same theme.² And for generations the effect of the Epicurean check on orthodoxy is seen in the whole intellectual life of the Greek world, already predisposed in that direction.³ The new schools of the Cynics and the Cyrenaics had alike shown the influence in their perfect freedom from all religious preoccupation, when they were not flatly dissenting from the popular beliefs. ANTISTHENES, the founder of the former school (fl. 400 B.C.), though a pupil of Sokrates, had been explicitly anti-polytheistic, and an opponent of anthropomorphism.⁴ ARISTIPPOS of Cyrene, also a pupil of Sokrates, who a little later founded the Hedonic or Cyrenaic sect, seems to have put theology entirely aside. One of the later adherents of the school, THEODOROS, was like Diagoras labelled "the Atheist"⁵ by reason of the directness of his opposition to religion; and in the Rome of Cicero he and Diagoras are the notorious atheists of history.⁶ To Theodoros, who had a large following, is attributed an influence over the thought of Epicurus,⁷ who, however, took the safer position of a verbal theism. The atheist is said to have been menaced by Athenian law in the time of Demetrius Phalereus, who protected him; and there is even a story that he was condemned to drink hemlock;⁸ but he was not of the type that meets martyrdom, though he might go far to provoke it.⁹ Roaming from court to

¹ *De rerum natura*, i, 62-79.

² *Alexander seu Pseudomantis*, cc. 25, 38, 47, 61, cited by Wallace, pp. 249-250.

³ The repute of the Epicureans for irreligion appears in the fact that when Romanised Athens had consented to admit foreigners to the once strictly Athenian mysteries of Eleusis, the Epicureans were excluded.

⁴ Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 13; Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata*, v. 14.

⁵ Diogenes Laërtius, B. ii, c. viii, §§ 7, 11-14 (86, 97-100). He was also nicknamed "the God." *Id.* and c. xii, 5 (§ 116).

⁶ Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 1, 23, 42.

⁷ Diogenes, as last cited, § 12 (97).

⁸ *Id.*, §§ 15, 16 (101-2).

⁹ Professor Wallace's account of the court of Lysimachos of Thrace as a "favourite resort of emancipated freethinkers" (*Epicureanism*, p. 42)

court, he seems never to have stooped to flatter any of his entertainers. "You seem to me," said the steward of Lysimachos of Thrace to him on one occasion, "to be the only man who ignores both gods and kings."¹

In the same age the same freethinking temper is seen in STILPO of Megara (fl. 307), of the school of Euclides, who is said to have been brought before the Areopagus for the offence of saying that the Pheidian statue of Athênê was "not a God," and to have met the charge with the jest that she was in reality not a God but a Goddess; whereupon he was exiled.² The stories told of him make it clear that he was an unbeliever, usually careful not to betray himself. Euclides, too, with his optimistic pantheism, was clearly a heretic; though his doctrine that evil is *non-ens*³ later became the creed of some Christians. Yet another professed atheist was the witty BION of Borysthenes, pupil of Theodoros, of whom it is told, in a fashion familiar to our own time, that in sickness he grew pious through fear.⁴ Among his positions was a protest or rather satire against the doctrine that the Gods punished children for the crimes of their fathers.⁵ In the other schools, SPEUSIPPOS (fl. 343), the nephew of Plato, leant to monotheism;⁶ STRATO of Lampsakos, the Peripatetic (fl. 290), called "the Naturalist," taught sheer pantheism, anticipating Laplace in declaring that he had no need of the action of the Gods to account for

is hardly borne out by his authority, Diogenes Laërtius, who represents Lysimachos as unfriendly towards Theodoros. Hipparchia the Cynic, too, opposed rather than agreed with the atheist.

¹ Diog., last cit. Cp. Cicero, *Tusculans*, ii, 43. Philo Judæus (*Quod Omnis Probus Liber*, c. 18: cp. Plutarch, *De Exilio*, c. 16) has a story of his repelling taunts about his banishment by comparing himself to Hercules, who was put ashore by the alarmed Argonauts because of his weight. But he is further made to boast extravagantly, and in doing so to speak as a believer in myths and deities. The testimony has thus little value.

² Diog., B. ii, c. xii, § 5 (116).

³ *Id.*, c. x, § 2 (106).

⁴ *Id.*, c. xii, § 5 (117) and B. iv, c. vii, §§ 4, 9, 10 (52, 54, 55).

⁵ Plutarch, *De defectu orac.*, c. 19. Bion seems to have made an impression on Plutarch, who often quotes him, though it be but to contradict him.

⁶ Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 13.

the making of the world;¹ DIKAIARCHOS (fl. 326–287), another disciple of Aristotle, denied the existence of separate souls, and the possibility of foretelling the future;² and ARISTO and CLEANTHES, disciples of Zeno, varied likewise in the direction of pantheism; the latter's monotheism, as expressed in his famous hymn, being one of several doctrines ascribed to him.³

Contemporary with Epicurus and Zeno and Pyrrho, too, was EVÊMEROS (Euhemerus), whose peculiar propaganda against Godism seems to imply theoretic atheism. His lost work, of which only a few extracts remain, undertook to prove that all the Gods had been simply famous men, deified after death; the proof, however, being by way of a fiction about old inscriptions found in an imaginary island.⁴ As above noted,⁵ the idea may have been borrowed from skeptical Phoenicians, the principle having already been monotheistically applied by the Bible-making Jews,⁶ though, on the other hand, it had been artistically and to all appearance uncritically acted on in the Homeric epopees. In any case, it seems to have had considerable vogue in the Hellenistic world; but with the effect rather of paving the way for new cults than of setting up scientific rationalism in place of the old ones.

One of its inferrible effects was to facilitate for the time the adoption of the Egyptian and eastern usage of deifying kings. It has been plausibly argued that this practice stands not so much for superstition as for skepticism, its opponents being precisely the orthodox believers, and its promoters those who had learned to doubt the actuality of the traditional Gods. Evêmerism

¹ *Id.*, *ib.* ; *Academics*, iv, 38.

² Cicero, *Tusculans*, i, 10, 31 ; *Academics*, ii, 39 ; and refs. in ed. Davis.

³ Sir A. Grant's trans. of the hymn is given in Capes' *Stoicism* ("Chief Ancient Philosophies" series), 1880, p. 41 ; and the Greek text by Mahaffy, *Greek Life and Thought*, p. 262. Cp. Cicero, *De nat. Deor.*, i, 14.

⁴ Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.*, B. ii, c. 2 ; Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, c. 23.

⁵ P. 78.

⁶ It may count for something that Diogenes the Babylonian, a follower of Chrysippos, is found applying the principle to Greek mythology. Cicero, *De nat. Deor.*, i, 15.

would clinch such a tendency ; and it is noteworthy that Evêmeros lived at the court of Cassander (319–296 B.C.) in a period in which every remaining member of the family of the deified Alexander had perished, mostly by violence ; while the contemporary Ptolemy I. of Egypt received the title of *Sotêr*, “Saviour,” from the people of Rhodes.¹ It is to be observed, however, that while in the next generation Antiochus I. of Syria received the same title, and his successor Antiochus II. that of *Theos*, “God,” the usage passes away ; Ptolemy III. being named merely *Evergetês*, “the Benefactor” (of the priests), and even Antiochus III. only “the Great.” Superstition was not to be ousted by a political exploitation of its machinery.²

In Athens, the democracy, restored in a subordinate form by Cassander’s opponent, Demetrius Poliorkêtes (B.C. 307), actually tried to put down the philosophic schools, all of which, but the Aristotelian in particular, were anti-democratic, and doubtless also comparatively irreligious. Epicurus and some of his antagonists were exiled within a year of his opening his school (B.C. 306) ; but the law was repealed in the following year.³ Theophrastus, the head of the Aristotelian school, was indicted in the old fashion for impiety, which seems to have consisted in denouncing animal sacrifice.⁴ These repressive attempts, however, failed ; and no others followed at Athens in that era ; though in the next century the Epicureans seem to have been expelled from Lythos in Crete and from Messenê in the Peloponnesos, nominally for their atheism, in reality probably on

¹ E. R. Bevan, art. “The Deification of Kings in the Greek Cities” in the *English Historical Review*, Oct., 1901, p. 631. Mr. Bevan argues that the practice was not primarily eastern, but Greek. See, however, Herodotus, vii, 136 ; Arrian, *Anab. Alexand.* iv, 11 ; Q. Curtius, viii, 5–8 ; and Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*. c. 22, as to the normal attitude of the Greeks, even as late as Alexander.

² See Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, cc. 22, 23, for the later Hellenistic tone on the subject of apotheosis apart from the official practice of the empire.

³ Gibbon, ch. xl. Bohn ed., iv, 353, and *note*.

⁴ Mahaffy, *Greek Life and Thought*, 1887, pp. 133–135 ; Diogenes Laërtius, B. ii, c. v. 5 (§ 38).

political grounds.¹ Thus Zeno was free to publish a treatise in which, besides far out-going Plato in schemes for dragooning the citizens into an ideal life, he proposed a State without temples or statues of the Gods or law courts or gymnasia.² In the same age there is trace of "an interesting case of rationalism even in the Delphic oracle."³ The people of the island of Astypalaia, plagued by hares or rabbits, solemnly consulted the oracle, which briefly advised them to keep dogs and take to hunting.

About the same time, we find Lachares, temporarily despot at Athens, plundering the shrine of Pallas of its gold.⁴ Even in the general public there must have been a strain of surviving rationalism; for among the fragments of Menander (fl. 300), who, in general, seems to have leant to a well-bred orthodoxy,⁵ there are some speeches savouring of skepticism and pantheism.⁶

It was in keeping with this general but mostly placid and non-polemic latitudinarianism that the New Academy, the second birth of the Platonic school, in the hands of ARKESILAOS and CARNEADES (213-129), and later of the Carthaginian CLITOMACHOS, should be marked by that species of skepticism thence called Academic—a skepticism which urged the doubtfulness of current religious beliefs without going the Pyrrhonian length of denying that any beliefs could be proved, or even denying the existence of the Gods.⁷ On this basis, in a healthy environment, science and energy might

¹ Wallace, *Epicureanism* (pp. 245-6), citing Suidas, s.v. *Epicurus*.

² Diogenes Laërtius, B. vii, c. i, 28 (§ 33); cp. Origen, *Against Celsus*, B. i, c. 5; Clemens Alex., *Stromata*, B. v, c. ii.

³ Mahaffy, as cited, p. 135, n.; Athenæus, ix, 63 (p. 400).

⁴ (B.C. 297). Burckhardt, *Griechische Culturgeschichte*, i, 213; Pausanias, i, 29.

⁵ Cp. G. Guizot, *Ménandre*, 1855, pp. 324-7, and App.

⁶ Cp. Guizot, pp. 327-331, and the fragments cited by Justin Martyr, *De Monarchia*, c. 5.

⁷ For the arguments of Carneades against the Stoic doctrine of immortality, see Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, iii, 12, 17. Mr. Benn pronounces this criticism of theology "the most destructive that has ever appeared, the armoury whence religious skepticism ever since has been supplied" (*The Philosophy of Greece*, etc., p. 258). This seems an over-statement.

have reared a constructive rationalism ; and for a time astronomy, in the hands of ARISTARCHOS of Samos (third century B.C.), ERATOSTHENES of Cyrene, the second keeper of the great Alexandrian library (second century B.C.), and above all of HIPPARCHOS of Nikaia, who did most of his work in the island of Rhodes, was carried to a height of mastery which could not be maintained, and was re-attained only in modern times.¹

Thus much could be accomplished by "endowment of research" as practised by the Ptolemies of Alexandria ; and after science had declined with the decline of their polity, and still further under Roman rule, the new cosmopolitanism of the second century of the empire reverted to the principle of intelligent evocation, producing under the Antonines the "Second" School of Alexandria. But the social conditions remained fundamentally bad ; and the earlier greatness was never recovered. "History records not one astronomer of note in the three centuries between Hipparchos and Ptolemy"; and Ptolemy (fl. 140 C.E.) not only retrograded into astronomical error, but elaborated on oriental lines a baseless fabric of astrology.² Other science mostly decayed likewise. The Greek world, already led to lower intellectual levels by the sudden ease and wealth opened up to it through the conquests of Alexander and the rule of his successors, was cast still lower by the Roman conquest. Pliny, extolling Hipparchos with little comprehension of his work, must needs pronounce him to have "dared a thing displeasing to God" in numbering the stars for posterity.³ In the air of imperialism, stirred by no other, original thought could not arise ; and the mass of the Greek-speaking populations, rich and poor, gravitated to the level of

¹ Berry, *Short History of Astronomy*, pp. 34-62 ; Narrien, *Histor. Account*, as cited, ch. xi ; L. U. K., *History of Astronomy*, ch. vi. It is noteworthy that Hipparchos, like so many of his predecessors, had some of his ideas from Babylonia. Strabo, *proem.*, § 9.

² Ptolemy normally lumps unbelief in religion with all the vices of character. Cp. the *Tetrabiblos*, iii, 18 (paraphrase of Proclus).

³ *Hist. Nat.*, ii, 26.

the intellectual¹ and emotional life of more or less well-fed slaves. In this society there rapidly multiplied private religious associations—*thiasoi*, *eranoi*, *orgeones*—in which men and women, denied political life, found new bonds of union and grounds of division in cultivating worships, mostly oriental, which stimulated the religious sense and sentiment.²

Such was the soil in which Christianity took root and flourished; while philosophy, after the freethinking epoch following on the fall of Athenian power, gradually reverted to one or other form of mystical theism or theosophy, of which the most successful was the Neo-Platonism of Alexandria.³ When the theosophic Julian rejoiced that Epicureanism had disappeared,⁴ he was exulting in a symptom of the intellectual decline that made possible the triumph of the faith he most opposed. Christianity furthered a decadence thus begun under the auspices of pagan imperialism; and “the fifth century of the Christian era witnessed an almost total extinction of the sciences in Alexandria”⁵—an admission which disposes of the dispute as to the guilt of the Arabs in destroying the great library.

Here and there, through the centuries, the old intellectual flame burns whitely enough: the noble figure of EPICTETUS in the first century of the new era, and that of the brilliant LUCIAN in the second, in their widely different ways remind us that the evolved faculty was still there if the circumstances had been such as to evoke it. MENIPPUS in the first century B.C. had played a similar part to that of Lucian, in whose freethinking dialogues he so often figures; but with less of subtlety

¹ Lucian's dialogue *Philopseudes* gives a view of the superstitions of average Greeks in the second century of our era. Cp. Mr. Williams's note to the first *Dialogue of the Dead*, in his trans., p. 87.

² See M. Foucart's treatise, *Des associations religieuses chez les Grecs*, 1873, 2e partie.

³ On the early tendency to orthodox conformity among the unbelieving Alexandrian scholars, see Mahaffy, *Greek Life and Thought*, pp. 260-1.

⁴ Frag. cited by Wallace, p. 258.

⁵ Rev. Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.*, 1834, p. 79.

and intellectuality. Lucian's was indeed a mind of the rarest lucidity; and the argumentation of his dialogue *Zeus Tragædos* covers every one of the main aspects of the theistic problem. There is no dubiety as to his atheistic conclusion, which is smilingly implicit in the reminder he puts in the mouth of Hermes, that, though a few men may adopt the atheistic view, "there will always be plenty of others who think the contrary—the majority of the Greeks, the ignorant many, the populace, and all the barbarians." But the moral doctrine of Epictetus is one of endurance and resignation; and the almost unvarying raillery of Lucian, making mere perpetual sport of the now moribund Olympian Gods, was hardly better fitted than the all-round skepticism of the school of SEXTUS EMPIRICUS to inspire positive and progressive thinking.

This latter school, described by Cicero as dispersed and extinct in his day,¹ appears to have been revived in the first century by Ænesidemus, who taught at Alexandria.² It seems to have been through him in particular that the Pyrrhonic system took the clear-cut form in which it is presented at the close of the second century by the accomplished Sextus "Empiricus"—that is, the empirical (*i.e.*, experiential) physician,³ who lived at Alexandria and Athens (fl. 175–205 C.E.). As a whole, the school continued to discredit dogmatism without promoting knowledge. Sextus, it is true, strikes acutely and systematically at ill-founded beliefs, and so makes for reason;⁴ but, like the whole Pyrrhonian school, he has no idea of a method which shall reach sounder conclusions. His aim is *ataraxia*, a philosophic calm of non-belief in any dogmatic affirmation beyond the positing of phenomena as such; and while such an attitude is beneficently exclusive of all

¹ *De Oratore*, iii, 17; *De Finibus*, ii, 12, 13.

² See Saisset, *Le Skepticisme*, 1865, pp. 22–27, for a careful discussion of dates.

³ His own claim was to be of the "methodical" school. *Hypotyp.*, i, 34.

⁴ See his doctrine fully expounded by the Rev. J. Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics*, i, 332 sq.

fanaticism, it unfortunately never makes any impression on the more intolerant fanatic, who is shaken only by giving him a measure of critical truth in place of his error. And as Sextus addressed himself to the students of philosophy, not to the simple believers in the Gods, he had no wide influence.¹ Avowedly accepting the normal view of moral obligations while rejecting dogmatic theories of their basis, the doctrine of the strict skeptics had the effect, from Pyrrho onwards, of giving the same acceptance to the common religion, merely rejecting the philosophic pretence of justifying it. Taken by themselves, the arguments against current theism in the third book of the *Hypotyposes*² are unanswerable; but, when bracketed with other arguments against the ordinary belief in causation, they had the effect of leaving theism on a par with that belief. Against religious beliefs in particular, therefore, they had no destructive effect.

Lucian, again, thought soundly and sincerely on life; his praise of the men whose memories he respected, as Epicurus and Demonax (if the Life of Demonax attributed to him be really his), is grave and heartfelt; and his ridicule of the discredited Gods was perfectly right so far as it went. It is certain that the unbelievers and the skeptics alike held their own with the believers in the matter of right living.³ In the period of declining pagan belief, the maxim that superstition was a good thing for the people must have wrought a quantity and a kind of corruption that no amount of ridicule of religion could ever approach. Polybius (fl. B.C. 150) agrees with his complacent Roman masters that their greatness is largely due to the carefully cultivated superstition of their populace, and charges with rashness and folly those who would uproot the growth;⁴ and Strabo,

¹ Cp. Owen, p. 349.

² These seem to be derived from Carneades. Cp. Ueberweg, i, 217.

³ "The general character of the Greek Skeptics from Sokrates to Sextos is quite unexceptionable" (Owen, *Evenings*, i, 352).

⁴ Polybius, B. vi, c. 56. Cp. B. xvi, Frag. 5 (12), where he speaks impatiently of the miracle-stories told of certain cults, and, repeating

writing under Tiberius—unless it be a later interpolator of his work—confidently lays down the same principle of governmental deceit,¹ though in an apparently quite genuine passage he vehemently protests the incredibility of the traditional tales about Apollo.² So far had the doctrine evolved since Plato preached it. But to countervail it there needed more than a ridicule which after all reached only the class who had already cast off the beliefs derided, leaving the multitude unenlightened. The lack of the needed machinery of enlightenment was, of course, part of the general failure of the Græco-Roman civilisation; and no one man's efforts could have availed, even if any man of the age could have grasped the whole situation. Rather the principle of esoteric enlightenment, the ideal of secret knowledge, took stronger hold as the mass grew more and more comprehensively superstitious. Even at the beginning of the Christian era the view that Homer's deities were allegorical beings was freshly propounded in the writings of Herakleides and Cornutus (Phornutus); but it served only as a kind of mystical *Gnosis*, on all fours with Christian Gnosticism, and was finally taken up by Neo-Platonists, who were no nearer rationalism for adopting it.³

So with the rationalism to which we have so many uneasy or hostile allusions in Plutarch. We find him resenting the scoffs of Epicureans at the doctrine of Providence, and recoiling from the "abyss of impiety"⁴ opened up by those who say that "Aphrodite is simply desire, and Hermes eloquence, and the Muses the arts and sciences, and Athênê wisdom";⁵ and in his essay

his opinion that some such stories are useful for preserving piety among the people, protests that they should be kept within bounds.

¹ B. i, c. 2, § 8. Plutarch (*Isis and Osiris*, c. 8) puts the more decent principle that all the apparent absurdities have good occult reasons.

² B. ix, c. iii, § 12. Cp. B. x, c. iii, § 23. The hand of an interpolator frequently appears in Strabo (*e.g.* B. ix, c. ii, § 40; c. iii, § 5); and the passage cited in B. i is more in the style of the former than of the latter.

³ See Dr. Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas upon the Christian Church*, 1890, pp. 60-64, *notes*; also above, pp. 143, and 161, *note*.

⁴ *De defect. orac.*, c. 19.

⁵ *De Amore*, c. 13. Cp. *Isis and Osiris*, cc. 66, 67, and *De defect. orac.* c. 13.

On Superstition he regretfully recognises the existence of many rational atheists, confessing that their state of mind is better than that of the superstitious who abound around him, with their "impure purifications and unclean cleansings," their barbaric rites, and their evil Gods. But the unbelievers, with their keen contempt for popular folly, availed as little against it as Plutarch himself, with his doctrine of a just mean. The one effectual cure would have been widened knowledge; and of such an evolution the social conditions did not permit. / ?

To return to a state of admiration for the total outcome of Greek thought, then, it is necessary to pass from the standpoint of simple analysis to that of comparison. It is in contrast with the relatively slight achievement of the other ancient civilisations than that of Greece, at its height, still stands out for posterity as a wonderful growth. That which, tried by the test of ideals, is as a whole only one more tragic chapter in the record of human frustration, yet contains within it light and leading as well as warning; and for long ages it was as a lost Paradise to a darkened world. It has been not untruly said that "the Greek spirit is immortal, because it was free":¹ free not as science can now conceive freedom, but in contrast with the spiritual bondage of Jewry and Egypt, the half-barbaric tradition of imperial Babylon, and the short flight of mental life in Rome. Above all, it was ever in virtue of the freedom that the high things were accomplished; and it was ever the falling away from freedom, the tyranny either of common ignorance or of mindless power, that wrought decadence. There is a danger, too, of injustice in comparing Athens with later States. When a high authority pronounces that "the religious views of the Demos were of the narrowest kind,"² he is not to be gainsaid; but the further verdict that "hardly any people has sinned more

¹ W. A. Schmidt, *Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert*, 1847, p. 22.

² Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 1892, p. 276.

heavily against the liberty of science" is unduly lenient to Christian civilisation. The heaviest sins of that against science, indeed, lie at the door of the Catholic Church ; but to make that an exoneration of the modern "peoples" as against the ancient would be to load the scales. And even apart from the Catholic Church, which practically suppressed all science for a thousand years, the attitude of Protestant leaders and Protestant peoples, from Luther down to the second half of the nineteenth century, has been one of hatred and persecution towards all science that clashed with the sacred books.¹ In the Greek world, there was more scientific discussion in the three hundred years down to Epicurus than took place in the whole of Christian Europe in thirteen hundred ; and the amount of actual violence used towards innovators in the pagan period, though lamentable enough, was trifling in comparison with that recorded in Christian history, to say nothing of the frightful annals of witch-burning, to which there is no parallel whatever in heathen history. The critic, too, goes on to admit that, while "Sokrates, Anaxagoras, and Aristotle fell victims in different degrees to the bigotry of the populace," "of course their offence was political rather than religious. They were condemned not as heretics, but as innovators in the *state* religion." And, as we have seen, all three of the men named taught in freedom for many years till political faction turned popular bigotry against them. The true measure of Athenian narrowness is not to be reached, therefore, without keeping in view the long series of modern outrages and maledictions against the makers and introducers of new machinery, and the multitude of such episodes as the treatment of Priestley in Christian Birmingham, little more than a century ago. On a full comparison the Greeks come out not ill.

It was, in fact, impossible that the Greeks should

¹ It is to be presumed that Dr. Burnet, when penning his estimate, had not in memory such a record as Dr. A. D. White's *History of the Warfare between Science and Theology*.

either stifle or persecute science or freethought as it was either stifled or persecuted by ancient Jews (who had almost no science by reason of their theology) or by modern Christians, simply because the Greeks had no anti-scientific hieratic *literature*. It remains profoundly significant for science that the ancient civilisation which on the smallest area evolved the most admirable life, which most completely transcended all the sources from which it originally drew, and left a record by which men are still charmed and taught, was a civilisation as nearly as might be without Sacred Books, without an organised priesthood, and with the largest measure of democratic freedom that the ancient world ever saw.

CHAPTER VI.

FREETHOUGHT IN ANCIENT ROME

§ 1.

THE Romans, so much slower and later than the Greeks in their intellectual development, were in some respects peculiarly apt to accept freethinking ideas when Greek rationalism at length reached them. After receiving from their Greek neighbours in Southern Italy, in the pre-historic period, the germs of higher culture, in particular the alphabet, they rather retrograded than progressed for centuries, the very alphabet degenerating for lack of literary activity¹ in the absence of any culture class, and under the one-idea'd rule of the landowning aristocracy, whose bent to military aggression was correlative to the smallness of the Roman facilities for commerce. In the earlier ages, nearly everything in the nature of written lore was a specialty of a few priests, and was limited to their purposes, which included some keeping of annals.² The use of writing for purposes of family records seems to have been the first literary development among the patrician laity.³ In the early republican period, however, the same conditions of relative poverty, militarism, and aristocratic emulation prevented any development even of the priesthood

¹ Mommsen, *History of Rome*, B. i, c. 14 (Eng. trans., 1894, vol. i, pp. 282-283). Mommsen's opinion of the antiquity of writing among the Latins (p. 280) is hardly intelligible. He places its introduction about or before 1000 B.C.; yet he admits that they got their alphabet from the Greeks, and he can show no Greek contacts for that period. Cp. pp. 167-8 (ch. 10). Schwegler (*Römische Geschichte*, 1853, i, 36) more reasonably places the period about that of the Etruscan domination, while recognising the Greek origin of the script.

² Schwegler, i, § 12; Teuffel, *Hist. of Roman Lit.*, ed. Schwabe, Eng. trans., 1900, i, 100-1, 104-110.

³ Teuffel, i, 110-11.

beyond the rudimentary stage of a primitive civic function ; and the whole of these conditions in combination kept the Roman Pantheon peculiarly shadowy, and the Roman mythology abnormally undeveloped.

The character of the Roman religion has been usually explained in the old manner, in terms of their particular "genius" and lack of genius. On this view the Romans primordially tended to do whatever they did—to be slightly religious in one period, and highly so in another. Teuffel quite unconsciously reduces the theorem to absurdity in two phrases: "As long as the *peculiar character of the Roman nation remained unaltered*".....(*Hist. of Roman Lit.*, ed. Schwabe, Eng. trans., 1900, i, 2): "the *peculiar Roman character had now come to an end, and for ever*" (*Id.*, p. 123). By no writer has the subject been more unphilosophically treated than by Mommsen, whose chapter on Roman religion (vol. i, ch. 12) is an insoluble series of contradictions. See them set forth in the present writer's *Christianity and Mythology*, 1900, pp. 103-4. M. Boissier contradicts himself hardly less strangely, alternately pronouncing the Latin religion timid and confident, prostrate and dignified (*La religion romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*, 4e édit. i, 7, 8, 26, 28). Both writers ascribe every characteristic of Roman religion to "the Romans" in the lump—a method which excludes any orderly conception. It must be abandoned if there is to be any true comprehension of the subject.

The differentiation of Greek and Roman religion is to be explained by the culture-history of the two peoples ; and that, in turn, was determined by their geographical situation and their special contacts. Roman life was made systematically agricultural and militarist by its initial circumstances, where Greek life in civilised Asia Minor became industrial, artistic, and literary. The special "genius" of Homer, or of various members of an order of bards developed by early colonial-feudal Grecian conditions, would indeed count for much by giving permanent artistic definiteness of form to the Greek Gods, where the early Romans, leaving all the vocal arts mainly to the conservative care of their women and children as something beneath adult male notice, missed the utilisation of poetic genius among them till they were long past the period of romantic simplicity (cp. Mommsen, B. i, c. 15: Eng. trans., 1894, vol. i, pp. 285-300). Hence the comparative abstractness of their unsung Gods (cp. Boissier, *La religion romaine*, as cited, i, 8), and the absence of such a literary mythology as was evolved and preserved in Greece by local patriotisms under the

stimulus of the great epopees and tragedies. The doctrine that "*the* Italian is deficient in the passion of the heart," and that *therefore* "Italian" literature has "never produced a true epos or a genuine drama" (Mommsen, c. 15, vol. i, p. 284), is one of a thousand samples of the fallacy of explaining a phenomenon in terms of itself. Teuffel with equal futility affirms the contrary: "Of the various kinds of poetry, *dramatic poetry* seems after all to be most in conformity with the character of the Roman people" (as cited, p. 3; cp. p. 28 as to the epos). On the same verbalist method, Mommsen decides as to the Etruscan religion that "the mysticism and barbarism of their worship had their foundation in the essential character of the Etruscan people" (ch. 12, p. 232).

Thus when Rome, advancing in the career of conquest, had developed a large aristocratic class, living a city life, with leisure for intellectual interests, and had come in continuous contact with the conquered Grecian cities of Southern Italy, its educated men underwent a literary and a rationalistic influence at the same time, and were the more ready to give up all practical belief in their own slightly-defined Gods when they found Greeks explaining away theirs. Here we see once more the primary historic process by which men are led to realise the ill-founded character of their hereditary creeds: the perception is indirectly set up by the reflective recognition of the creeds of others, and all the more readily when the others give a critical lead. Indeed, Greek rationalism was already old when the Romans began to develop a written and artistic literature: it had even taken on the popular form given to it by Evêmeros a century before the Romans took it up. Doubtless there was skepticism among the latter before Ennius: such a piece of religious procedure as the invention of a God of Silver (*Argentinus*), son of the God of Copper (*Æsculanius*), on the introduction of a silver currency, B.C. 269, must have been smiled at by the more intelligent.¹

¹ Mommsen, B. ii, c. 8, Eng. trans., ii, 70. Such creation of deities by mere abstraction of things and functions had been the rule in the popular as distinguished from the civic religion. Cp. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, iv, 16, 23; vi, 9, etc. But the practice was not peculiar to the Romans, for among the Greeks were Gods or Goddesses of Wealth, Peace,

Mommsen states (ii, 70) that at this epoch the Romans kept "equally aloof from superstition and unbelief," but this is inaccurate on both sides ; and, though superstition was certainly the rule, there are traces of rationalism. On the next page, the historian himself admits that the faith of the people had already been shaken by the interference allowed to the priestly colleges in political matters ; and in another chapter (B. ii, c. 13 ; vol. ii, 112) he recalls that a consul of the Claudian gens had jested openly at the auspices in the first Punic war, B.C. 249. The story is told by Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, ii, 3, and Suetonius, *Tiberius*, c. 2. The sacred poultry on being let out of their coop on board ship would not feed, so that the auspices could not be taken ; whereupon the consul caused them to be thrown into the water, *etiam per jocum Deos inridens*, saying they might drink if they would not eat. His colleague Junius in the same war also disregarded the auspices ; and in both cases, according to Balbus the Stoic in Cicero's treatise, the Roman fleets were duly defeated ; whereupon Claudius was condemned by the people, and Junius committed suicide. Cp. Valerius Maximus, l. i, c. iv, § 3. Such stories would fortify the age-long superstition as to auspices and omens, which was in full force among Greek commanders as late as Xenophon, when many cultured Greeks were rationalists. But it was mainly a matter of routine, in a sphere where freethought is slow to penetrate. Cato, who would never have dreamt of departing from a Roman custom, was the author of the saying (Cicero, *De Div.*, ii, 24) that haruspices might well laugh in each other's faces. He had in view the Etruscan practice, being able to see the folly of that, though not of his own. Cp. Mommsen, iii, 116. As to the Etruscan origin of the haruspices, in distinction from the augurs, see Schweigler, i, 276, 277.

But it is with the translation of the *Sacred History* of Evêmeros by ENNIUS, about 200 B.C., that the literary history of Roman freethought begins. In view of the position of Ennius as a teacher of Greek and *belles lettres* (he being of Greek descent, and born in Calabria), it cannot be supposed that he would openly translate an anti-religious treatise without the general acquiescence

Mercy, Shame, Fortune, Rumour, Energy, Action, Persuasion, Consolation, Desire, Yearning, Necessity, Force, etc. See Pausanias, *passim*. The inference is that the more specific deities in all religions, with personal names, are the product of sacerdotal institutions. M. Boissier (i, 5) takes it for granted that the multitude of deified abstractions had no legends ; but this is unwarranted. They may have had many ; but there were no priests to preserve and ritualise them.

of his aristocratic patrons. Cicero says of him that he "followed" as well as translated Evêmeros;¹ and his favourite Greek dramatists were the freethinking Euripides and Epicharmos, from both of whom he translated.² The popular superstitions, in particular those of soothsaying and divination, he sharply attacked.³ If his patrons all the while stood obstinately to the traditional usages of official augury and ritual, it was in the spirit of political conservatism that belonged to their class and their civic ideal, and on the principle that religion was necessary for the control of the multitude. In Etruria, where the old culture had run largely to mysticism and soothsaying on quasi-oriental lines, the Roman government took care to encourage it, by securing the theological monopoly of the upper-class families,⁴ and thus set up a standing hot-bed of superstition. In the same spirit they adopted from time to time popular cults from Greece, that of the Phrygian Mother of the Gods being introduced in the year 204 B.C. The attempt to suppress the Bacchic mysteries, B.C. 186, of which a distorted and extravagant account⁵ is given by Livy, was made on grounds of policy and not of religion; and even if the majority of the senate had not been disposed to encourage the popular appetite for emotional foreign worships, the multitude of their own accord would have introduced the latter, in resentment of the exclusiveness of the patricians in keeping the old domestic and national cults in their own hands.⁶ As new eastern conquests multiplied the number of foreign slaves and residents in

¹ *De natura Deorum*, i, 42.

² Mr. Schuckburgh (*History of Rome*, 1894, p. 401, note) cites a translated passage in his fragments (Cicero, *De Div.*, ii, 50; *De nat. Deorum*, iii, 32), putting the Epicurean view that the Gods clearly did not govern human affairs, "which he probably would have softened if he had not agreed with it." Cp. Mommsen, iii, 113 (B. ii, c. 13).

³ *Fragmenta*, ed. Hesselius, p. 226; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, i, 58.

⁴ Mommsen, i, 301; ii, 71; iii, 117 (B. i, c. 15; B. ii, c. 8; B. iii, c. 13). Cicero, *De Div.*, i, 41.

⁵ Livy, xxix, 18.

⁶ Cp. Boissier, *La religion romaine*, i, 39, 346.

Rome, the foreign worships multiplied with them ; and with the worships came such forms of freethought as then existed in Greece, Asia Minor, and Egypt. In resistance to these, as to the orgiastic worships, political and religious conservatism for a time combined. In 173 B.C., the Greek Epicurean philosophers Alkaïos and Philiskos were banished from the city,¹ a step which was sure to increase the interest in Epicureanism. Twelve years later the Catonic party carried a curt decree in the Senate against the Greek rhetors,² *uti Romae ne essent*; and in 155 the interest aroused by Carneades and the other Athenian ambassadors led to their being suddenly sent home, on Cato's urging.³ Still the Greeks multiplied, especially after the fall of Macedonia,⁴ and in the year 92 we find the censors vetoing the practices of the *Latin* rhetors as an unpleasing novelty,⁵ thus leaving the Greeks in possession of the field.⁶ But, the general social tendency being downwards, it was only a question of time when the rationalism should be overgrown by the superstition. In 137 there had been another vain edict against the foreign soothsayers and the worshippers of Sabazius;⁷ but it was such cults that were to persist, while the Roman religion passed away.

¹ Teuffel, i, 122.

² Aulus Gellius (xv, 11) says the edict was *de philosophis et de rhetoribus Latinis*, but the *senatus-consultum*, as given by him, does not contain the adjective ; and he goes on to tell that *aliquot deinde annis post*—really sixty-nine years later—the censors fulminated against *homines qui NOVUM genus disciplinæ instituerunt.....eos sibi nomen imposuisse Latinas rhetoras*. The former victims, then, were presumably Greek. Cp. Shuckburgh, p. 520 ; and Long, *Decline of the Roman Republic*, 1866, ii, 146. Professor Pelham (*Outlines of Roman History*, 1893, p. 179, *note*) mistakenly cites the *senatus-consultum* as containing the word "*Latini*." The reading *Latinis* in Gellius' own phrase has long been suspected. See ed. Frederic and Gronov, 1706.

³ Plutarch, *Cato*, c. 22.

⁴ Polybius, xxxii, 10.

⁵ Suetonius, *De claris rhetoribus*.

⁶ See in Cicero, *De Oratore*, iii, 24, the account by the censor Crassus of his reasons for preferring the Greek rhetors.

⁷ Valerius Maximus, i, 3, 1.

§ 2.

While self-government lasted, rationalism among the cultured classes was fairly common. The great poem of LUCRETIUS, *On the Nature of Things*, with its enthusiastic exposition of the doctrine of Epicurus, remains to show to what a height of sincerity and ardour a Roman freethinker could rise. No Greek utterance that has come down to us makes so direct and forceful an attack as his on religion as a social institution. He is practically the first systematic freethinking propagandist; so full is he of his purpose that after his stately prologue to *alma Venus*, who is for him but a personification of the genetic forces of Nature, he plunges straight into his impeachment of religion as a foul tyranny from which thinking men were first freed by Epicurus. The sonorous verse vibrates with an indignation such as Shelley's in *Queen Mab*: religion is figured as *horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans*; a little further on its deeds are denounced as *scelerosa atque impia*, "wicked and impious," the religious term being thus turned against itself; and a moving picture of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia justifies the whole. "To so much of evil could religion persuade." It is with a bitter consciousness of the fatal hold of the hated thing on most men's ignorant imagination that he goes on to speak of the fears¹ so assiduously wrought upon by the *vates*, and to set up with strenuous speed the vividly-imagined system of Epicurean science by which he seeks to fortify his friend against them. That no thing comes from nothing or lapses into nothing; that matter is eternal; that all things proceed "without the Gods" by unchanging law, are his insistent themes; and for nigh two thousand years a religious world has listened with a reluctant respect.

And yet throughout the whole powerful poem we have testimony to the pupillary character of Roman thought in relation to Grecian. However much the

¹ *De rerum natura*, i, cp. v, 1166.

earnest student may outgo his masters in emphasis and zeal of utterance, he never transcends the original irrationality of asserting that "the Gods" exist, albeit it is their glory to do nothing. It is in picturing their ineffable peace that he reaches his finest strains of song,¹ though in the next breath he repudiates every idea of their control of things cosmic or human. He swears by their sacred breasts, *proh sancta deum pectora*, and their life of tranquil joy, when he would express most vehemently his scorn of the thought that it can be they who hurl the lightnings which haply destroy their own temples and strike down alike the just and the unjust.

The explanation of the anomaly seems to be twofold. In the first place, Roman thought had not lived long enough—it never did live long enough—to stand confidently on its own feet and criticise its Greek teachers. In Cicero's treatise *On the Nature of the Gods*, the Epicurean and the Stoic in turn retail their doctrine as they had it from their school, the Epicurean affirming the existence and the inaction of the Gods with equal confidence, and repeating without a misgiving the formula about the Gods having not bodies but quasi-bodies, with not blood but quasi-blood; the Stoic, who stands by most of the old superstitions, professing to have his philosophical reasons for them. Each sectarian derides the beliefs of the other; neither can criticise his own creed. It would seem as if in the habitually militarist society, even when it turns to philosophy, there must prevail a militarist ethic and psychology in the intellectual life; each man choosing a flag or a leader and fighting through thick and thin on that side henceforth. On the other hand, the argumentation of the high-priest Cotta in the dialogue turns to similar purpose the kindred principle of civic tradition. He argues in turn against the Epicurean's science and the

¹ ii, 646–650 (the passage cited by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons in one of the Bradlaugh debates, with a confession of its noble beauty); and again ii, 1090–1105, and iii, 18–22.

Stoic's superstition, contesting alike the claim that the Gods are indifferent and the claim that they govern ; and in the end he brazenly affirms that, while he sees no sound philosophic argument for religious beliefs and practices, he thinks it is justifiable to maintain them on the score of prescription or ancestral example. Here we have the senatorial or conservative principle.¹ In terms of that ideal, which prevailed alike with believers and indifferentists,² and mediated between such rival schools as the Epicurean and Stoic, we may partly explain the Epicurean theorem itself. For the rest, it is to be understood as an outcome partly of surviving sentiment and partly of forced compromise in the case of its Greek framers, and of the habit of partisan loyalty in the case of its Roman adherents.

In the arguments of Cotta, the unbelieving high-priest, we presumably have the doctrine of CICERO himself.³ With his vacillating character, his forensic habit, and his genius for mere speech, he could not but betray his own lack of intellectual conviction ; and such weakness as his found its natural support in the principle of use and wont, the practice and tradition of the commonwealth. On that footing he had it in him to boast like any pedigree'd patrician of the historic religiousness of Rome, he himself the while being devoid of all religious belief. His rhetoric on the subject can hardly be otherwise estimated than as sheer hustings hypocrisy. Doubtless he gave philosophic colour to his practice by noting the hopeless conflict of the creeds of the positive sects, very much as in our own day conservative dialectic finds a ground for religious

¹ See the account of the doctrine of the high-priest Scaevola, preserved by Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, iv, 27. He and Varro (*Id.*, iv, 31 ; vi, 5-7) agreed in rejecting the current myths, but insisted on the continued civic acceptance of them. On the whole question compare Boissier, *La religion romaine*, i, 47-63.

² Thus the satirist LUCILIUS, who ridiculed the popular beliefs, was capable, in his capacity of patriot, of crying out against the lack of respect shown to religion and the Gods. (Boissier, pp. 51-52.) The purposive insincerity set up in their thinking by such men must of course have been injurious to character.

³ Cp. the *De Divinatione*, i, 2.

conformity in the miscarriages of the men of science.¹ But Cicero does not seem even to have had a religious sentiment to cover the nakedness of his political opportunism. Not only does he in the *Tusculan Disputations* put aside in the Platonic fashion all the Homeric tales which anthropomorphise and discredit the Gods;² but in his treatise *On Divination* he shows an absolute disbelief in all the recognised practices, including the augury which he himself officially practised; and his sole excuse is that they are to be retained "on account of popular opinion and of their great public utility."³ As to prodigies, he puts in germ the argument later made famous by Hume: either the thing could happen (in the course of nature) or it could not: if it could not, the story is false: if it could, *non esse mirandum*—there is no miracle.⁴ In his countless private letters, again, he shows not a trace of religious feeling,⁵ or even of interest in the questions which in his treatises he declares to be of the first importance.⁶ Even the doctrine of immortality, to which he repeatedly returns, seems to have been for him, as for so many Christians since, only a forensic theme, never a source of the private consolation he ascribed to it.⁷

In Cicero's case, in fine, we reach the conclusion that either the noted inconstancy of his character pervaded all his thinking, or that his gift for mere utterance, and his demoralising career as an advocate, overbore in him all sincere reflection. But, indeed, the practical subversion of all rational ethic in the public life of late republican Rome, wherein men claimed to be free and self-governing, yet lived by oppressing the rest of the world, was on all hands fatal to the moral rectitude

¹ E.g., Mr. A. J. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*.

² *Tusc. Disp.*, i, 26.

³ *De Divinatione*, ii, 33, 34, cp. ii, 12; and *De nat. Deorum*, i, 22. It is not surprising that in a later age, when the remaining Pagans had no dialectic faculty left, the Christian Fathers, by using Cicero as a weapon against the cults, could provoke them into calling him impious (Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, iii, 6, 7).

⁴ *De Divinatione*, ii, 22.

⁶ *De nat. Deorum*, ii, 1.

⁵ Boissier, i, 58.

⁷ Boissier, p. 59.

which inspires a critical philosophy. In the upper-class Rome of Cicero's day, his type seems to have been predominant,¹ the women alone being in the mass orthodox,² and in their case the tendency was to add new superstitions to the old. Among public men, there subsisted a clear understanding that public religion should continue, for reasons of State. When we find an eminent politician like the elder M. Æmilius Scaurus prosecuted in the year 103 B.C., on a charge of neglecting certain religious ceremonies connected with his offices, we know that there had been neither conscientious abstention on his part nor sincere religious resentment on the other side, but merely a resort by political enemies, after Greek precedent, to a popular means of blackening an antagonist; for the same Scaurus, who was a member of the college of augurs, had actually rebuilt or restored the temple of Fides, said to have been founded by Numa, and that of Mens (Prudence), which had been set up after the great defeat of the Romans at the Trasimene lake;³ the early and the late procedure alike illustrating the political and pragmatic character of Roman religion.⁴ In the supreme figure of JULIUS CÆSAR we see the Roman brain at its strongest; and neither his avowed unbelief in the already popular doctrine of immortality,⁵ nor his repeatedly expressed contempt for the auspices,⁶ withheld him from holding and fulfilling the function of

¹ "It seems to me that, on the whole, among the educated and the rich, the indifferent must have been in the majority" (Boissier, p. 61).

² *Id.*, p. 59.

³ Cp. Long, *Decline of the Roman Empire*, i, 438; ii, 38-40. Long remarks that Domitius, the accuser of Scaurus (who had prevented his election to the college of augurs), "used the name of religion for the purpose of damaging a political enemy; and the trick has been repeated, and is repeated, up to the present day. The Romans must have kept records of many of these trials. They were the great events of the times.....; and so we learn that three tribes voted against Scaurus, and thirty-two voted for him; but in each of these thirty-two tribes there was only a small majority of votes (*pauca puncta*) in favour of Scaurus."

⁴ See Long, i, 56, for a cynical estimate of the mode of manipulation of the Sibylline and other sacred books.

⁵ Sallust, *Bellum Catilin.*, c. 51.

⁶ Suetonius, *Julius*, cc. 59, 77; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, ii, 24. Cp. Merivale, *History of the Romans under the Empire*, ed. 1865, ii, 424.

high pontiff. The process of skepticism had been rapid among the men of action. The illiterate Marius carried about with him a Syrian prophetess; of Sulla, who unhesitatingly plundered the temple of Delphi, it was said that he carried a small figure of Apollo as an amulet;¹ of Cæsar, unless in so far as it may be true that in his last years, like Napoleon, he grew to believe in omens as his powers failed, under the stress of perpetual conflict,² it cannot be pretended that he was aught but a convinced freethinker.³ The greatest and most intellectual man of action in the ancient world had no part in the faith which was supposed to have determined the success of the most powerful of all the ancient nations.

Dean Merivale, noting that Cæsar "professed without reserve the principles of the unbelievers," observes that, "freethinker as he was, he could not escape from the universal thralldom of superstition in which his contemporaries were held" (*History of the Romans under the Empire*, ed. 1865, ii, 424). The reproach, from a priest, is piquant, but misleading. All the stories on which it is founded apply to the last two or three years of Cæsar's life; and supposing them to be all true, which is very doubtful, they would but prove what has been suggested above, that the overstrained soldier, rising to the dizzy height of a tremendous career, partly lost his mental balance, like so many another. (Cp. Mackail, *Latin Literature*, 1895, p. 80.) Such is the bearing of the doubtful story (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.*, xxviii, 2) that after the breaking down of a chariot (presumably the casualty which took place in his fourfold triumph: see Dion, xlviii, 21) he never mounted another without muttering a charm. M. Boissier (i, 70) makes the statement of Pliny apply to Cæsar's whole life; but although Pliny gives no particulars, even Dean Merivale (p. 372) connects it with the accident in the triumph. To the same time belongs

¹ Plutarch, *Sulla*, c. 29; *Marius*, c. 16. Long (*Decline of Roman Republic*, ii, 369) says of Sulla that, "though he could rob a temple when he wanted money, he believed in the religion of his time. We should call him superstitious; and a man who is superstitious is capable of any crime, for he believes that the Gods can be conciliated by prayers and presents."

² Compare the fears which grew upon Cromwell in his last days.

³ Pompeius, on the other hand, had many seers in his camp; but after his overthrow expressed natural doubts about Providence. Cicero, *De Div.*, ii, 24, 47; Plutarch, *Pompeius*, c. 75.

the less challengeable record (Dion Cassius, ix, 23) of his climbing on his knees up the steps of the Capitol to propitiate Nemesis. The very questionable legend, applied so often to other captains, of his saying, *I have thee, Africa*, when he stumbled on landing (Sueton., *Jul.*, 59), is a proof not of superstition but of presence of mind in checking the superstitious fears of the troops; and was so understood by Suetonius; as was the rather flimsy story of his taking with him in Africa a man nicknamed Salutio (Sueton., *ibid.*) to neutralise the luck of the opposing Cornelii. The whole turn given to the details by the clerical historian is arbitrary and unjudicial. Nor is he accurate in saying that Cæsar "denied the Gods" in the Senate. He actually swore by them, *per Deos immortales*, in the next sentence to that in which he denied a future state. The assertion of the historian (p. 423), that in denying the immortality of the soul Cæsar denied "the recognised foundation of all religion," is a no less surprising error. The doctrine never had been so recognised in ancient Rome. A Christian ecclesiastic might have been expected to remember that the Jewish religion, believed by him to be divine, was devoid of the "recognised foundation" in question, and that the canonical book of Ecclesiastes expressly discards it. Of course, Cæsar offered sacrifices to Gods in whom he did not believe. That was the habitual procedure of his age.

§ 3.

It is significant that the decay of rationalism in Rome begins and proceeds with the Empire. Augustus, whose chosen name was sacerdotal in its character,¹ made it part of his policy to restore as far as possible the ancient cults, many of which had fallen into extreme neglect, between the indifference of the aristocratic class² and the devotion of the populace, itself so largely alien, to the more attractive worships introduced from Egypt and the east. That he was himself a habitually superstitious man seems certain;³ but even had he not been,

¹ Boissier, i, 73.

² See the citation from Varro in Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, vi, 2. Cp. Suetonius, *Augustus*, 29.

³ The only record to the contrary is the worthless scandal as to his "suppers of the Twelve Gods" (Sueton., *Aug.*, 70). The statement of W. A. Schmidt that "none of the Julians was orthodox" (*Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert*, 1847, p. 175) is somewhat overstrained.

his policy would have been natural from the Roman point of view. A historian of two centuries later puts in the mouth of Mæcenas an imagined counsel to the young emperor to venerate and enforce the national religion, to exclude and persecute foreign cults, to put down alike atheism and magic, to control divination officially, and to keep an eye on the philosophers.¹ What the empire sought above all things was stability; and a regimen of religion, under imperial control, seemed one of the likeliest ways to keep the people docile. Julius himself had seemed to plan such a policy,² though he also planned to establish public libraries,³ which would hardly have promoted faith among the educated.

Augustus, however, aimed at encouraging public religion of every description, repairing or rebuilding eighty-two temples at Rome alone, giving them rich gifts, restoring old festivals and ceremonies, reinstituting priestly colleges, encouraging special foreign worships, and setting up new civic cults; himself playing high pontiff and joining each new priesthood, to the end of making his power and prestige so far identical with theirs;⁴ in brief, anticipating the later ruling principle of the Church of Rome. The natural upshot of the whole process was the imperial apotheosis, or raising of each emperor to Godhead at death. The usage of deifying living rulers was long before common in Egypt and the east,⁵ and had been adopted by the conquering Spartan Lysander in Asia Minor as readily as by the conquering Alexander. Julius Cæsar seems to

¹ Dion Cassius, lii, 36.

² *E.g.*, his encouragement of a new college of priests founded in his honour. Dion, xliv, 6.

³ Suetonius, *Julius*, 44, 56. The first public library actually opened in Rome was founded by Asinius Pollio under Augustus, and was placed in the forecourt of the temple of Liberty: Augustus founded two others; Tiberius a fourth, in his palace; Vespasian a fifth, in the temple of Peace; Domitian a sixth, on the Capitol. W. A. Schmidt, *Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert*, 1847, pp. 151-2, and refs.

⁴ Boissier, pp. 67-108; Suetonius, *Aug.*, xxix-xxxii.

⁵ L'Abbé Beurlier, *Le Culte Impérial*, 1891, introd. and ch. 1; Boissier, ch. 2. Cp. p. 182, *note*, above.

have put it aside as a nauseous flattery ;¹ but Augustus wrought it into his policy. It was the consummation at once of the old political conception of religion and of the new autocracy.

In a society so managed, all hope of return to self-government having ceased, the level of thought sank accordingly. There was practically no more active freethought. HORACE, with his *credat Judæus Apella*, and his frank rejection of the fear of the *Deos tristes*,² was no believer, but he was not one to cross the emperor,³ and he was ready to lend himself to the official policy of religion ;⁴ OVID could satirise⁵ the dishonest merchant who prayed to the Gods to absolve his frauds ; but he hailed Augustus as the sacred founder and restorer of temples,⁶ prayed for him as such, busied himself with the archæology of the cults, and made it, not quite without irony, a maxim to "spare an accepted belief."⁷ VIRGIL, at heart a pantheist with rationalistic leanings,⁸ but sadly divided between Lucretius and Augustus, his poetical and his political masters,⁹ tells all the transition from the would-be scientific to the newly-credulous age in the two wistful lines—

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.....

Fortunatus et ille, Deos qui novit agrestes¹⁰

—"happy he who has been able to learn the causes of things ; fortunate also he who has known the rural Gods." The Gods, rural and other, entered on their due heritage in a world of decadence ; Virgil's epic is a religious celebration of antiquity ; and Livy's history

¹ It would seem that the occasion on which he enraged the Senate by not rising to receive them (Sueton., *Jul.*, 78) was that on which they came to announce that they had made him a God, Jupiter Julius, with a special temple and a special priest. See Long, *Decline of the Roman Republic*, v, 418. He might very well have intended to rebuke their baseness. But cp. Boissier, i, 122, citing Dion, xlvi, 6.

² *1 Sat.*, v, 98-103.

³ As to the conflict between Horace's bias and his policy, cp. Boissier, i, 193-201.

⁴ *E.g.*, *Carm.*, iii, 6.

⁵ *Fasti*, v, 673-692.

⁶ *Fasti*, ii, 61-66.

⁷ *Fasti*, iv, 204. The preceding phrase, *pro magno teste vetustas creditur*, certainly has an ironic ring.

⁸ *Æneid*, vi, 724-7.

⁹ Cp. Boissier, i, 228-9.

¹⁰ *Georgics*, ii, 490, 493.

is written in the credulous spirit, or at least in the tone, of an older time, with a few concessions to recent common sense.¹ In the next generation SENECA'S monotheistic aversion to the popular superstitions is the high-water mark of the period, and represents the elevating power of the higher Greek Stoicism. On this score he belongs to the freethinking age, while his theistic apriorism belongs to the next.² All the while his principle of conformity to all legal observances³ leaves him powerless to modify the environment.

As the empire proceeds, the echoes of the old freethought become fewer and fewer. It is an entire misconception to suppose that Christianity came into the Roman world as a saving counter-force to licentious unbelief. Unbelief had in large part disappeared before Christianity made any headway ; and that creed came as one of many popular cults, succeeding in terms of its various adaptations to the special conditions, moral and economic. It was easy for the populace of the empire to deify a ruler : as easy as for those of the East to deify Jesus ; or for the early Romans to deify Romulus : at Rome it was the people, now so largely of alien stock, who had most insisted on deifying Cæsar.⁴ But the upper class soon kept pace with them in the zest for religion. In the first century, the elder PLINY recalls the spirit of Lucretius by the indignant eloquence with which he protests against the burdensome belief in immortality ; but, though Seneca and others reject the fear of future torment, Pliny is the last writer to repudiate with energy the idea of a future state.⁵ A number of epitaphs still chime with his view ; but already the majority are on the other side ;⁶ and the fear of hell was normally as active as the hope of heaven ; while the belief in an approaching end of the world was proportionally as common as it was later under Christianity.⁷

¹ Cp. Boissier, i, 193.

² *Id.*, ii, 84-92.

³ *Ep.* xcv.

⁴ Suetonius, *Jul.*, 88.

⁵ *Hist. nat.*, vii, 55 (56). Cp. Boissier, i, 300.

⁶ *Id.*, pp. 301-3.

⁷ See the praiseworthy treatise of Mr. J. A. Farrer, *Paganism and Christianity*, 1891, cc. 5, 6, and 7.

And though Pliny, discussing the bases of magic, of which he recognised the fraudulence, ranks among them the influences of religion, as to which he declared mankind to be still in extreme darkness,¹ we have seen how he in turn, on theistic grounds, frowned upon Hipparchos for daring to number the stars.² Thus, whatever may be the truth as to the persecutions of the Christians in the first two centuries of the empire, the motive was in all cases certainly political or moral, as in the earlier case of the Bacchic mysteries, not rationalistic hostility to its doctrines as apart from Christian attacks on the established worships.

Some unbelievers there doubtless were after PETRONIUS, whose perdurable maxim that "Fear first made Gods in the world,"³ adopted in the next generation by STATIUS,⁴ was too pregnant with truth to miss all acceptance among thinking men. The fact that Statius in his verse ranked Domitian with the Gods made its truth none the less pointed. The Alexandrian rationalist CHAEREMON, who had been appointed one of the tutors of Nero, had explained the Egyptian religion as a mere allegorising of the physical order of the universe.⁵ It has been remarked too that in the next century the appointment of the freethinking Greek Lucian by Marcus Aurelius to a post of high authority in Egypt showed that his writings gave no great offence at court,⁶ where, indeed, save under the two great Antonines, religious seriousness was rare. These, however, were the exceptions: the whole cast of mind developed under the autocracy, whether in the good or in the bad, made for

¹ ".....vires religionis, ad quas maxime etiamnum caligat humanum genus." *Hist. nat.*, xxx, 1.

² Above, p. 184.

³ *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor.* Frag. xxii, ed. Burmanni. The whole passage is noteworthy. See also his *Satyricon*, c. 137, as to his estimate of sacerdotal sincerity.

⁴ *Thebaid*, iii, 661.

⁵ Porphyry, *Epistle to Anebo* (with Jamblichus). Chaeremon, however, is said to have regarded comets as divine portents. Origen, *Against Celsus*, B. i, c. 59.

⁶ Professor C. Martha, *Les moralistes sous l'empire romain*, ed. 1881, p. 341.

belief and acquiescence or superstition rather than for searching doubt and sustained reasoning.

The statement of Mosheim or of his commentators (*Eccles. Hist.*, 1 Cent. Pt. I, c. i, § 21, *note*; Murdock's trans., Reid's ed.) that JUVENAL (Sat. xiii, 86) "complains of the many atheists at Rome" is a perversion of the passage cited. Juvenal's allusion to those who put all things down to fortune and deny a moral government of the world begins with the phrase "*sunt qui*," "there are (some) who"; he makes far more account of the many superstitious, and never suggests that the atheists are numerous in his day. Neither does he "complain": on the contrary, his allusion to the atheists as such is non-condemnatory as compared with his attacks on pious rogues, and is thus part of the ground for holding that he was himself something of a freethinker—one of the last among the literary men. In the tenth Satire (346 sqq.) he puts the slightly theistic doctrine, sometimes highly praised (ed. Ruperti, 1817, *in loc.*), that men should not pray for anything, but leave the decision to the Gods, to whom man is dearer than to himself. There too occurs the famous doctrine (356) that if anything is to be prayed for it should be the *mens sana in corpore sano*, and the strong soul void of the fear of death. The accompanying phrase about offering "the intestines and the sacred sausages of a whitish pig" is flatly contemptuous of religious ceremonial; and the closing lines, placing the source of virtue and happiness within, are strictly naturalistic. In the two last:

Nullum numen habes, si sit prudentia; nos [*or sed*] te
Nos facimus, Fortuna, Deam, cœloque locamus,

the frequent reading *abest* for *habes* seems to make the better sense: "No divinity is wanting, if there be prudence; but it is we, O fortune, who make thee a Goddess, and throne thee in heaven." In any case, the insistence is on man's lordship of himself. (The phrase occurs again in Sat. xiv, 315.)

As regards the general tone of Roman literature from the first century onwards, the summing up of Renan is substantially just:—"The freethinkers.....diminish little by little and disappear.....Juvenal alone continues in Roman society, down to the time of Hadrian, the expression of a frank incredulity..... Science dies out from day to day. From the death of Seneca, it may be said that there is no longer a thoroughly rationalistic scholar. Pliny the Elder is inquisitive, but uncritical. Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, avoid commenting on the inanity of the most ridiculous inventions. Pliny the Younger (Ep. vii, 27) believes in puerile stories of ghosts; Epictetus (xxxi, 5)

would have all practise the established worship. Even a writer so frivolous as Apuleius feels himself bound to take the tone of a rigid conservative about the Gods (*Florida*, i, 1 ; *De Magia*, 41, 55, 56, 63). A single man, about the middle of this century, seems entirely exempt from supernatural beliefs ; that is Lucian. The scientific spirit, which is the negation of the supernatural, exists only in a few ; superstition invades all, enfeebling all reason" (*Les Évangiles*, ed. 1877, pp. 406-7).

?) That the mental paralysis connects causally with the political conditions will perhaps not now be denied. A censorship of the written word belongs congenitally to autocracy ; and only the personal magnanimity of Cæsar and the prudence of Augustus delayed its development in Rome. Soon it became an irresistible terrorism. Even Cæsar, indeed, so far forgot one of the great rules of his life as to impeach before the Senate the tribunes who had quite justifiably prosecuted some of the people who had hailed him as king ;¹ and the fact that the Senate was already slavish enough to eject them gives the forecast of the future. Augustus long showed a notable forbearance to all manner of verbal opposition, and even disparagement ; but at length he too began to prosecute for private aspersions,² and even to suppress histories of a too critical stamp. Tiberius began his reign with the high-pitched sentiment that "in a free State tongue and mind should be free" ;³ and for a time he bore himself with an exemplary restraint ; but he too in turn took the colour of his place, and became murderously resentful of any semblance of aspersion on himself.⁴ The famous sentiment ascribed to him in the

¹ W. A. Schmidt, who cites this act (*Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert*, pp. 31-33) as the beginning of the end of free speech in Rome, does not mention the detail, given by Dion (xliv, 10), that Cæsar suspected the tribunes of having set on some of the people to hail him as king. But the unproved suspicion does not justify his course, which was a bad lapse of judgment, even if the suspicion were just. From this point, a conspiracy against his life was natural. Cp. Long, *Decline of the Roman Republic*, v, 432-3, as to the facts.

² See W. A. Schmidt, *Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert*, pp. 34-108, for a careful analysis of the evolution. As to the book-censure, see pp. 101-4.

³ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, c. 28.

⁴ *Id.*, c. 61.

Annals of Tacitus, *Deorum injuria diis curae*¹—"the Gods' wrongs are the Gods' business"—is not noted by Suetonius, and has an un-Roman sound. What Suetonius tells is² that he was "very negligent concerning the Gods and religions," yet addicted to the astrologers, and a believer in fate. The fact remains that, while as aforesaid there must have been still a number of unbelievers, there is no sign after Lucretius of any Roman propaganda against religion; and the presumption is that the Augustan policy of promoting the old cults was extended to the maintenance of the ordinary Roman view that disrespect to the Gods was a danger to the State. In the reign of Nero we find trace of a treatise *De religionis erroribus* by Fabricius Veiento,³ wherein was ridiculed the zeal of the priests to proclaim mysteries which they did not understand; but, whether or not its author was exiled and the book burnt on their protest, such literature was not further produced.⁴

There was, in fact, no spirit left for a Lucretian polemic against false beliefs. Everything in the nature of a searching criticism of life was menaced by the autocracy; Nero decreeing that no man should philosophise at Rome,⁵ after slaying or banishing a series of philosophers;⁶ Domitian crucifying the very scribes who copied the work of Hermogenes of Tarsus, in which he was obliquely criticised.⁷ When men in the mass crouched before such tyranny, helplessly beholding emperor after emperor overtaken by the madness that accrues to absolute power, they were disabled for any

¹ *Annals*, i, 73. That such a phrase should have been written by an emperor in an official letter, and yet pass unnoticed through antiquity save in one historical work, recovered only in the Renaissance, is one of the minor improbabilities that give colour to the denial of the genuineness of the *Annals*.

² *Tiberius*, c. 69.

³ Petronius, *Satyricon*, ad init.

⁴ In the *Annals* (xiv, 50) it is stated that the book attacked senators and pontiffs; that it was condemned to be burned, and Veiento to be exiled; and that the book was much sought and read while forbidden; but that it fell into oblivion when all were free to read it. Here, again, there is no other ancient testimony. Veiento is heard of again in Juvenal, iv, 113, 123-129.

⁵ Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, iv, 47.

⁶ Cp. Schmidt, pp. 346-7.

⁷ Suetonius, *Domitian*, c. 10.

disinterested warfare on behalf of truth. All serious impeachment of religion proceeds upon an ethical motive ; and in imperial Rome there was no room for any nobility of ethic save such as upbore the Stoics in their austere pursuit of self-control, in a world too full of evil to be delighted in.

Thus it came about that the Cæsars, who would doubtless have protected their co-operating priesthoods from any serious attack on the official religion,¹ had practically no occasion to do so. Lucian's jests were cast at the Gods of Greece, not at those of the Roman official cults : hence his immunity. What the Cæsars were concerned to do was rather to menace any alien religion that seemed to undermine the solidarity of the State ; and of such religions, first the Jewish, and later the Christian, were obvious examples. Thus we have it that Tiberius " put down foreign religions " (*externas ceremonias*), in particular the Egyptian and Judaic rites ; pulling down the temple of Isis, crucifying her priests, expelling from Rome all Jews and proselytes, and forcing the Jewish youth to undergo military service in unhealthy climates.² Even the astrologers, in whose lore he believed, he expelled until they promised to renounce their art—a precedent partly set up by Augustus,³ and followed with varying severity by all the emperors, pagan and Christian alike.

And still the old Italian religion waned, as it needs must. On the one hand, the Italic population was almost wholly replaced or diluted by alien stocks, slave or free, with alien cults and customs ; on the other, the utter insincerity of the official cults, punctiliously conserved by well-paid, unbelieving priests, invited indifference. In the nature of things, an unchanging creed is moribund : life means adaptation to change ; and it was

¹ Cp. Schmidt, p. 157.

² Suetonius, *Tiberius*, c. 36 ; Josephus, *Antiquities*, xviii, 3, §§ 4, 5. Josephus specifies isolated pretexts, which Suetonius does not mention. They are not very probable.

³ Who destroyed 2,000 copies of prophetic books. Suetonius, *Aug.*, c. 31.

only the alien cults that in Rome adapted themselves to the psychological mutation. Among the educated, who had read their Lucretius, the spectacle of the innumerable cults of the empire conduced either to entire but tacit unbelief, or to a species of vaguely rationalistic¹ yet sentimental monotheism, in which Reason sometimes figured as universal Deity.² Among the uneducated the progression was constant towards one or other of the emotional and ritualistic oriental faiths, so much better adapted to their down-trodden life.

§ 4.

One element of betterment there was in the life of declining Rome, until the Roman ideals were superseded by oriental. Even the Augustan poets, Horace and Ovid, had protested like the Hebrew prophets, and like Plato and like Cicero, against the idea that rich sacrifices availed with the Gods above a pure heart; and such doctrine, while paganism lasted, prevailed more and more.³ At the same time, Horace rejects the Judæo-Stoic doctrine, adopted in the Gospels, that all sins are equal, and lays down the rational moral test of utility—*Utilitas justi propè mater et æqui*.⁴ The men who grew up under the autocracy, though inevitably feebler and more credulous in their thinking than those of the commonwealth, developed at length a concern for conduct, public and private, which lends dignity to the later philosophic literature, and lustre to the imperial rule of the Antonines. This concern it was that, linking Greek theory to Roman practice, produced a code of

¹ See, in the following chapter, as to the rationalistic mythology of Macrobius.

² Cp. Propertius, ii, 14, 27 sqq. ; iii, 23, 19-20 ; iv, 3, 38 ; Tibullus, iv, 1, 18-23 ; Juvenal, as before cited, and xv, 133, 142-146.

³ Plato, 2 *Alcib.* ; Cicero, *Pro Cluentio*, c. 68 ; Horace, *Carm.*, iii, 23, 17 ; Ovid, *Heroides*, *Acont. Cydipp.*, 191-2 ; Persius, *Sat.*, ii, 69 ; Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, i, 6. Cp. Diod. Sic., xii, 20 ; Varro, in Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, vii, 1.

⁴ 1 *Sat.* iii, 96-98. Cp. Cicero, *De Finibus*, iv, 19, 27, 28 ; Matt., v, 19-28 ; James, ii, 10. Lactantius, again (*Div. Inst.*, iii, 23), denounces the doctrine of the equality of offences as laid down by Zeno, giving no sign of knowing that it is also set forth in his own sacred books.

rational law which could serve Europe for a thousand years. This concern too it was, joined with the relatively high moral quality of their theism, that ennobled the writing of Seneca¹ and Epictetus and Maximus of Tyre; and irradiates the words as well as the rule of Marcus Aurelius. In them was anticipated all that was good² in the later Christian ethic, even as the popular faiths anticipated the Christian dogmas; and they cherished a temper of serenity that the Fathers fell far short of. To compare their pages with those of the subsequent Christian fathers—Seneca with Lactantius, “the Christian Cicero”; Maximus with Arnobius; Epictetus with Tertullian; the admirable Marcus, and his ideal of the “dear city of Zeus,” with the shrill polemic of Augustine’s *City of God* and the hysteria of the *Confessions*—is to prove a rapid descent in magnanimity, sanity, self-command, sweetness of spirit, and tolerance. What figures as religious intolerance in the Cæsars was, as we have seen, always a political, never a religious animosity. Any prosecution of Christians under the Antonines was certainly on the score of breach of law, turbulence, or real or supposed malpractices, not on that of heresy—a crime created only by the Christians themselves, in their own conflicts.

The scientific account of the repellent characteristics of the Fathers, of course, is not that their faith made them what they were, but that the ever-worsening social and intellectual conditions assorted such types into their ecclesiastical places, and secured for them their influence over the types now prevailing among the people. They too stand for the intellectual dissolution wrought by imperialism. When all the higher forms of intellectual efficiency were at an end, it was impossible that on any religious impulse whatever there should be generated

¹ On Seneca’s moral teaching, cp. Martha, *Les Moralistes sous l’empire romain*, pp. 57–66; Boissier, *La religion romaine*, ii, 80–82. M. Boissier further examines fully the exploded theory that Seneca received Christian teaching. On this compare Bishop Lightfoot, *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, pp. 237–292.

² Seneca was so advanced in his theoretic ethic as to consider all war on a level with homicide. *Epist.*, xcv, 30.

either a higher code of life or a saner body of thought than those of the higher paganism of the past. Their very arguments against paganism are largely drawn from old "pagan" sources. Those who still speak of the rise of Christianity in the ancient world as a process of "regeneration" are merely turning historical science out of doors. The Christian fathers had all the opportunity that a life of quasi-intellectual specialism could supply; and their liberty of criticism as regarded the moribund pagan creeds was a further gymnastic; but nothing could countervail the insanity of their intellectual presuppositions, which they could not transcend.

Inheriting the Judaic hypnotism of the Sacred Book, they could reason only as do railers; and the moral readjustment which put them in revolt against the erotic element in pagan mythology was a mere substitution of an ascetic neurosis for the old disease of imagination. Strictly speaking, their asceticism, being never rationalised, never rose to the level of ethic as distinguished from mere taboo or sacrosanct custom. As we shall see, they could not wholly escape the insurgence of the spirit of reason; but they collectively scouted it with a success attained by no other ostensibly educated priesthood of antiquity. They intellectually represent, in fact, the consummation of the general Mediterranean decadence.

For the rest, the "triumph" of the new faith was simply the survival of the forms of thought, and, above all, of the form of religious community, best fitted to the political and intellectual environment. The new Church organisation was above all things a great economic endowment for a class of preachers, polemicists, and propagandists; and between the closing of the old spheres of public life and the opening of the new,¹ the new faith was established as much by political and

¹ It is to be noted that preaching had begun among the moralists of Rome in the first century, and was carried on by the priests of Isis in the second; and that in Egypt monasticism had long been established. Martha, as cited, p. 67; Boissier, i, 356-9. Cp. Mosheim, 2 Cent., Pt. II., c. iii, §§ 13, 14, as to monasticism.

economic conditions as by its intellectual adaptation to an age of mental twilight.

Of the religion of the educated pagans in its last forms, then, it is finally to be said that it was markedly rationalistic as compared with the Christianity which followed, and has been on that ground stigmatised by Christian orthodoxy down till our own day. The religion of Marcus Aurelius is self-reverence, self-study, self-rule, *plus* faith in Deity ; and it is not to be gainsaid that, next to his adoptive father Antoninus Pius, he remains the noblest monarch in ancient history ; the nearest parallel being the more superstitious but still noble Julian, the last of the great pagan rulers. In such rulers the antique philosophy was in a measure justified of its children ; and if it never taught them to grapple with the vast sociological problem set up by the Empire, and so failed to preserve the antique civilisation, it at least did as much for them in that regard as the new faith did for its followers.

CHAPTER VII.

ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY AND ITS OPPONENTS

§ 1.

THE Christian Gospels, broadly considered, stand for a certain measure of freethinking reaction against the Jewish religion, and are accordingly to be reckoned with in the present inquiry; albeit their practical outcome was only an addition to the world's supernaturalism and traditional dogma. To estimate aright their share of freethought, we have but to consider the kind and degree of demand they made on the reason of the ancient listener, as apart, that is, from the demand made on their basis for the recognition of a new Deity. When this is done it will be found that they express in parts a process of reflection which outwent even critical common-sense in a kind of ecstatic Stoicism, an oriental repudiation of the tyranny of passions and appetites; in other parts a mysticism that proceeds as far beyond the credulity of ordinary faith. Socially considered, they embody a similar opposition between an anarchistic and a partly orthodox or regulative ideal. The plain inference is that they stand for many independent movements of thought in the Græco-Roman world. It is actually on record that the reduction of the whole law to love of one's neighbour¹ was taught before the Christian era by the famous Rabbi Hillel;² and the Gospel itself³ shows that this view was current. In another passage⁴ the reduction of the ten commandments to five again indicates a not uncommon disregard

¹ Mt. xxii, 39; Mk. xii, 31.

³ Mk. xii, 32.

² Talmud, tract. *Sabbath*, 306.

⁴ Lk. xviii, 20.

for the ecclesiastical side of the law. But the difference between the two passages points of itself to various forces of relative freethought.

Any attentive study of the Gospels discloses not merely much glossing and piecing and interpolating of documents, but a plain medley of doctrines, of ideals, of principles ; and to accept the mass of disconnected utterances ascribed to "the Lord," many of them associated with miracles, as the oral teaching of any one man, is a proceeding so uncritical that in no other study could it now be followed. The simple fact that the Pauline Epistles (by whomsoever written) show no knowledge of any Jesuine miracles or teachings whatever, except as regards the Last Supper (1 Cor. xi, 24-25—a passage obviously interpolated), admits of only three possible interpretations :—(1) the Jesus then believed in had not figured as a teacher at all ; *or* (2) the writer or writers gave no credit or attached no importance to reports of his teachings. Either of these views (of which the first is plainly the more plausible) admits of (3) the further conclusion that the Pauline Jesus was not the Gospel Jesus, but an earlier one—a fair enough hypothesis ; but on that view the mass of Dominical utterances in the Gospels is only so much the less certificated. When, then, it is admitted by all open-minded students that the *events* in the narrative are in many cases fictitious, even when they are not miraculous, it is wholly inadmissible that the *sayings* should be trustworthy, as one man's teachings.

Analysing them in collation, we find even in the Synoptics, and without taking into account the Fourth Gospel, such wide discrepancies as the following :—

1. The doctrine : "the Kingdom of God is among you" (Lk. xvii, 21), side by side with promises of the speedy arrival of the Son of Man, whose coming = the Kingdom of God (cp. Mt. iii, 2, 3 ; iv, 17 ; Mk. i, 15).
2. The frequent profession to supersede the Law (Mt. v, 21, 33, 38, 43, etc.) ; and the express declaration that not one jot or tittle thereof is to be superseded (Mt. v, 17-20).
3. Proclamation of a gospel for the poor and the enslaved

(Lk. iv, 18); with the tacit acceptance of slavery (Lk. xvii, 7, 9, 10; where the word translated "servant" in the A.V., and let pass by McClellan, Blackader, and other English critics, certainly means "slave").

4. Stipulation for the simple fulfilment of the Law as a passport to eternal life, with or without further self-denial (Mt. xix, 16-21; Lk. x. 28; xviii, 22); on the other hand a stipulation for simple benevolence, as in the Egyptian ritual (Mt. xxv; cp. Lk. ix, 48); and yet again stipulations for blind faith (Mt. x, 15) and for blood redemption (Mt. xxvi, 28).

5. Alternate promise (Mt. vi, 33; xix, 29) and denial (Mt. x, 34-39) of temporal blessings.

6. Alternate commands to secrecy (Mt. xii, 16; viii, 4; ix, 30; Mk. iii, 12; v, 43; vii, 36) and to publicity (Mt. vii, 7-8; Mk. v, 19) concerning miracles, with a frequent record of their public performance.

7. Specific restriction of salvation to Israelites (Mt. x, 5, 6; xv, 24; xix, 28); equally specific declaration that the Kingdom of God shall be to another nation (Mt. xxii, 43); no less specific assurance that the Son of Man (not the Twelve as in Mt. xix, 28) shall judge all nations, not merely Israel (Mt. xxv, 32; cp. viii, 11).

8. Profession to teach all, especially the simple and the childlike (Mt. xviii, 3; xi, 25, 28-30; Mk. x, 15); on the contrary a flat declaration (Mt. xiii, 10-16; Mk. iv, 11; Lk. viii, 10; cp. Mk. iv, 34) that the saving teaching is only for the special disciples; yet again (Mt. xv, 16; Mk. vi, 52; viii, 17, 18) imputations of lack of understanding to them.

9. Companionship of the Teacher with "publicans and sinners" (Mt. ix, 10); and on the other hand a reference to the publicans as falling far short of the needed measure of loving-kindness (Mt. v, 46).

10. Explicit contrarieties of phrase, not in context (Mt. xii, 30; Lk. xi, 50).

11. Flat contradictions of narrative as to the Teacher's local success (Mt. xiii, 54-58; Lk. iv, 23).

12. Insistence that the Messiah is of the Davidic line (Mt. i; xxi, 15; Lk. i, 27; ii, 4), and that he is not (Mt. xxii, 43-45; Mk. xii, 35-37; Lk. xx).

13. Contradictory precepts as to limitation and non-limitation of forgiveness (Mt. xviii, 17, 22).

Such variously serious discrepancies count for more than even the chronological and other divergences of the records concerning the Birth, the Supper, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, as proofs of diversity of

source ; and they may be multiplied indefinitely. The only course for criticism is to admit that they stand for the ideas of a variety of sects or movements, or else for an unlimited manipulation of the documents by individual hands. Many of them may very well have come from various so-called "Lords" and "Messiahs"; but they cannot be from a single teacher.

There remains open the fascinating problem as to whether some if not all of the more notable teachings may not be the utterances of one teacher of commanding originality, whose sectaries were either unable to appreciate or unable to keep separate his doctrine.¹ Undoubtedly some of the better teachings came first from men of superior capacity and relatively deep ethical experience. The veto on revenge, and the inculcation of love to enemies, could not come from commonplace minds ; and the saying preserved from the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, "unless ye cease from sacrificing the wrath shall not cease from you," has a remarkable ring.² But when we compare the precept of forgiveness with similar teachings in the Hebrew books and the Talmud,³ we realise that the capacity for such thought had been shown by a number of Jewish teachers, and that it was a specific result of the long sequence of wrong and oppression undergone by the Jewish people at the hands of their conquerors. The unbearable, consuming pain of an impotent hate, and the spectacle of it in others—this experience among thoughtful men, and not an unconditioned genius for ethic in one, is the source of a teaching which, categorically put as it is in the Gospels, misses its meaning with most who profess to admire it ; the proof being the entire failure of most Christians in all ages to act

¹ See the impressive argument of Dr. Moncure Conway in his *Solomon and Solomonic Literature*, 1899, ch. xviii.

² See Dr. Nicholson's *The Gospel according to the Hebrews*, 1879, p. 77. Cp. Conway, p. 222. Dr. Nicholson insists that at least the word "sacrificing" must be spurious, because "it is surely impossible that Jesus ever uttered this threat"!

³ Cp. the author's *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 442-3.

on it. To say nothing of similar teaching in Old Testament books and in the Talmud, we have it in the most emphatic form in the pre-Christian "Slavonic Enoch."¹

A superior ethic, then, stands not for one man's supernormal insight, but for the acquired wisdom of a number of wise men. And it is now utterly impossible to name the individual framers of the Gospel teachings, good or bad. The central biography dissolves at every point before critical tests: it is a mythical construction.² Of the ideas in the Sermon on the Mount, many are ancient; of the parabolic and other teachings, some of the most striking occur only in the third Gospel, and are unquestionably late. And when we are asked to recognise a unique personality behind any one doctrine, such as the condemnation of sacrifice in the uncanonical Hebrew Gospel, we can but answer (1) that on the face of the case this doctrine appears to come from a separate circle; (2) that the renunciation of sacrifice was made by many Greek and Roman writers,³ and by earlier teachers among the Hebrews;⁴ and (3) that in the Talmud, and in such a pre-Christian document as the "Slavonic Enoch," there are teachings which, had they occurred in the Gospels, would have been confidently cited as unparalleled in ancient literature. The Talmudic teachings, so vitally necessary in Jewry, that "it is better to be persecuted than persecutor," and that, "were the persecutor a just man and the persecuted an impious, God would still be on the side of the persecuted,"⁵ are not equalled for practical purposes by any in the Christian sacred books; and the Enochic beatitude, "Blessed is he who looks to raise his own hand for labour,"⁶ is no less remarkable. But it is impossible to associate these teachings with any outstanding personality, or

¹ *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, known as the "Slavonic Enoch," ch. xliv, 1 (Eng. trans. 1896, pp. 60, 67).

² See the author's *Pagan Christs*, Pt. II.

³ Above, p. 213.

⁴ Hosea, vi, 6; Psalm, xl, 6, 7; Ecclesiastes, v, i.

⁵ Talmud, *Yoma-Derech Eretz*; Midrash, *Vayikra-Rabba*, xxvii, 11 and 12.

⁶ Ch. lii (p. 69).

any specific movement; and to posit a movement-making personality in the sole case of certain scattered sayings in the Gospels is critically inadmissible.

There is positively no ground for supposing that any selected set of teachings constituted the basis or the original propaganda of any single Christian sect, primary or secondary; and the whole known history of the cult tells against the hypothesis that it ever centred round those teachings which to-day specially appeal to the ethical rationalist. Such teachings are more likely to be adventitious than fundamental, in a cult of sacrificial salvation. When an essentially rationalistic note is struck in the Gospels, as in the insistence¹ that a notable public catastrophe is not to be regarded in the old Jewish manner as a punishment for sin, it is cancelled in the next sentence by an interpolation which unintelligently reaffirms the very doctrine denied.² So with the teaching³ that the coming worship is to be neither Judaic nor Samaritan: the next sentence reaffirms Jewish particularism in the crudest way. The main movement, then, was clearly superstitious.

It remains to note the so-far rationalistic character of such teachings as the protests against ceremonialism and sabbatarianism, the favouring of the poor and the outcast, the extension of the future life to non-Israelites, and the express limitation of prayer (Mt. vi, 9; Lk. xi, 2) to a simple expression of religious feeling—a prescription which has been absolutely ignored through the whole history of the Church, despite the constant use of the one prayer prescribed—itself a compilation of current Jewish phrases.

The expression in the Dominical prayer translated “Give us this day [*or* day by day] our daily bread” (Mt. vi, 11; Lk. xi, 3) is pointless and tautological as it stands in the English and other Protestant versions. In verse 8 is the

¹ Luke xiii, 4.

² Cp. Conway, *Solomon and Solomonic Literature*, 1899, pp. 57, 201, 219.

³ John iv, 21.

assurance that the Father knows beforehand what is needed ; the prayer is, therefore, to be a simple process of communion or advocacy, free of all verbiage ; then, to make it specially ask for the necessary subsistence, without which life would cease, and further to make the demand each day, when in the majority of cases there would be no need to offer such a request, is to stultify the whole. If the most obvious necessity is to be urged, why not all the less obvious ? The Vulgate translation, "Give us to-day our super-substantial bread," though it has the air of providing for the Mass, is presumptively the original sense ; and is virtually supported by McClellan (*N.T.* 1875, ii, 645-7), who notes that the repeated use of the article, τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον, implies a special meaning, and remarks that of all the suggested translations "*daily*" is "the very one which is most manifestly and utterly condemned." Compare the bearing of the verses Mt. vi, 25-26, 31-34, which expressly exclude the idea of prayer for bread, and Lk. xi, 13. The idea of a super-substantial bread seems already established in Philo, *De Legum Allegor.*, iii, 55-57, 59-61. Naturally the average theologian (*e.g.*, Bishop Lightfoot, cited by McClellan) clings to the conception of a daily appeal to the God for physical sustenance ; but in so doing he is utterly obscuring the original doctrine.

Properly interpreted, the prayer forms a curious parallel to the close of the tenth satire of Juvenal, above cited, where all praying for concrete boons is condemned, on the ground that the Gods know best, and that man is dearer to them than to himself ; but where there is permitted (of course, illogically) an appeal for soundness of mind and spiritual serenity. The documents would be nearly contemporary, and, though independent, would represent kindred processes of ethical and rational improvement on current religious practice. On the other hand, the prayer, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"—which again rings alien to the context—would have been scouted by Juvenal as representing a bad survival of the religion of fear. Several early citations and early MSS., it should be noted, give a briefer version of the prayer, beginning, "Father, hallowed be thy name," and dropping the "Thy will be done" clause, as well as the "deliver us from evil," though including the "lead us not into temptation."

It may or may not have been that this rationalisation of religion was originally preached by the same sect or school as gave the exalted counsel to resist not evil and to love enemies—a line of thought found alike in India and in China and, in the moderate form of a veto on

retaliation, in Greece and Rome.¹ But it is inconceivable that the same sect originally laid down the doctrines of the blood sacrifice and the final damnation of those who did not accept the Messiah (Mt. x). The latter dogmas, with the myths, naturally became the practical creed of the later Church, for which the counsel of non-sollicitous prayer and the love of enemies were unimaginable ideals.² Equally incapable of realisation by a State Church was the anti-Pharisaical and "Bohemian" attitude ascribed to the founder, and the spirit of independence towards the reigning powers. For the rest, the occult doctrine that a little faith might suffice to move mountains—a development from the mysticisms of the Hebrew prophets—could count for nothing save as an incitement to prayer in general. The freethinking elements in the Gospels, in short, were precisely those which historic Christianity inevitably cast aside.

§ 2.

Already in the Epistles the incompatibility of the original critical spirit with sectarian policy has become clear. Paul—if the first epistle to the Thessalonians be his—exhorts his converts to "prove all things, hold fast what is good";³ and by way of making out the Christist case against unpliant Jews he argues copiously in his own way; but as soon as there is a question of "another Jesus"⁴ being set up, he is the sectarian fanatic pure and simple, and he no more thinks of applying the counsel of criticism to his dogma⁵ than of acting on his prescription of love in controversy. "Reasonings" (λογισμοὺς) are specially stigmatised: they must be

¹ *E.g.*, Plato, *Crito*, Jowett's tr. 3rd ed., ii, 150; Seneca, *De Ira*, ii, 32. Valerius Maximus (iv, 2, 4) even urges the returning of benefits for injuries.

² It is impossible to find in the whole patristic literature a single display of the "love" in question. In all early Christian history there is nothing to represent it save the attitude of martyrs towards their executioners—an attitude seen often in pagan literature. (*E.g.*, Ælian, *Var. Hist.* xii, 49.)

³ 1 Thess. v, 21.

⁴ 2 Cor. xi, 4; Gal. i, 6.

⁵ Cp. Rom. ix, 14-21.

“cast down.”¹ The attitude towards slavery now becomes a positive fiat in its support;² and all political freethinking is superseded by a counsel of conformity.³ The slight touch of rationalism in the Judaic epistle of James, where the principle of works is opposed to that of faith, is itself quashed by an anti-rational conception of works.⁴ From a sect so taught, freethinking would tend to disappear. It certainly obtruded itself early, for we have the Pauline complaint⁵ that “some among you say there is no rising from the dead”; but men of that way of thinking had no clear ground for belonging to the community, and would soon be preached out of it, leaving only so much of the spirit of criticism as produced heresies within the sphere of supernaturalism.

§ 3.

When the new creed, spreading through the Empire, comes actively in contact with paganism, the rationalistic principle of anti-idolatry, still preserved by the Jewish impulse, comes into prominence; and in so far as they criticised pagan myths and pagan image-worship, the early Christians may be said to have rationalised.⁶ Polytheists applied the term “atheistical” alike to them⁷ and the Jews.⁸ As soon as the cult was joined by lettered men, the primitive rationalism of Evêmeros was

¹ 2 Cor. x, 5. Needless to say, such an expression savours strongly of late invention; but in any case it tells of the attitude of the Christian teachers of the second century.

² 1 Cor. vii, 20-24 (where the phrase translated in English “use it rather” unquestionably means “rather continue” = remain a slave. Cp. Eph. vi, 5, and Variorum Teacher’s Bible *in loc.*).

³ Rom. xiii, 1. Cp. 1 Peter ii, 13-14; Tit. iii, 1. The anti-Roman spirit in the Apocalypse is Judaic, not Gentile-Christian; the book being of Jewish origin.

⁴ James ii, 21.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv, 12.

⁶ The Apology of Athenagoras (2nd c.) is rather a defence of monotheism than a Christian document; hence no doubt its speedy neglect by the Church.

⁷ Justin Martyr, 1 *Apol.* c. 5; Min. Felix, *Octavius*, c. 10.

⁸ “The inhabitants of Coelesyria, Idumea, and Judea are principally influenced by Aries and Ares, and are generally audacious, atheistical, and treacherous” (Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, ii, 3—Paraphrase of Proclus).

turned by them to account; and a series of Fathers, including Clement of Alexandria, Arnobius, Lactantius, and Augustine, pressed the case against the pagan creeds with an unflagging malice, which, if exhibited by later rationalists towards their own creed, Christians would characterise in strong terms. But the practice of criticism towards other creeds was, with the religious as with the philosophical sects, no help to self-criticism. The attitude of the Christian mass towards pagan idols and the worship of the Emperor was rather one of frenzy¹ than of intellectual superiority;² and the Fathers never seem to have found a rationalistic discipline in their polemic against pagan beliefs. Where the unbelieving Lucian brightly banters, they taunt and asperse, in the temper of barbarians deriding the Gods of the enemy. None of them seems to realise the bearing against his own creed of the pagan argument that to die and to suffer is to give proof of non-deity.³ In the end, the very image-worship which had been the main ground of their rational attack on paganism became the universal usage of their own church; and its worship of saints and angels, of Father, Son, and Virgin Mother, made it more truly a polytheism than the creed of the later pagans had been.⁴ It is therefore rather to the heresies within the church than to its attacks on the old polytheism that we are to look for early Christian survivals of ancient rationalism; and for the most part, after the practically rationalistic refusal of the early Ebionites to accept the doctrine of the Virgin Birth,⁵ these heresies were but combinations of other theosophies with the Christian.

Already in the spurious Epistles to Timothy we have

¹ Cp. Tertullian, *De Idolatria*, passim, and *Ad Scapulam*, c. 5.

² For the refusal to worship men as Gods they had of course abundant pagan precedent. See above, p. 182, note.

³ E.g. Tertullian, *De Testimonio Animæ*, c. 1; Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes*, i, 41, etc.; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, c. xv; *Epit.* c. vii.

⁴ Cp. J. A. Farrer, *Paganism and Christianity*, ch. 7.

⁵ Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, i, 26. Cp. Hagenbach, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3te Aufl., § 23, 4 (p. 37), as to Cerinthus.

allusion to the "antitheses of the *gnosis*"¹ or pretended occult knowledge; and to early Gnostic influences may be attributed those passages in the Gospel, above cited, which affirm that the Messiah's teaching is not for the multitude but for the adepts.² All along, Gnosticism³ stood for the influence of older systems on the new faith; an influence which among Gentiles, untrained to the cult of sacred books, must have seemed absolutely natural. In the third century Ammonios Saccas, of Alexandria, said to have been born of Christian parents, set up a school which sought to blend the Christian and the pagan systems of religion and philosophy into a pantheistic whole, in which the old Gods figured as subordinate dæmons or as allegorical figures, and Christ as a reformer.⁴ The special leaning of the school to Plato, whose system, already in vogue among the scholars of Alexandria, had more affinity to Christianity than any of its rivals,⁵ secured for it adherents of many religious shades,⁶ and enabled it to develop an influence which permanently affected Christian theology; this being the channel through which the doctrine of the Trinity entered. According to Mosheim, almost no other philosophy was taught at Alexandria down to the sixth century.⁷ Only when the regulative zeal of the church had begun to draw the lines of creed definitely⁸ on anti-philosophic lines did the syncretic school, as

¹ 1 Tim. vi, 20. The word persistently translated "oppositions" is a specific term in Gnostic lore. Cp. R. W. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, 1854, p. 115, note.

² Cp. Harnack, *Outlines of the History of Dogma*, Mitchell's trans., p. 77 (c. 6), p. 149 (B. ii, c. 6); Gieseler, *Comp. of Eccles. Hist.* i, § 63, Eng. tr. i, 234, as to the attitude of Origen.

³ The term Gnostic, often treated as if applicable only to heretical sects, was adopted by Clemens of Alexandria as an honourable title. Cp. Gieseler, p. 241, as cited.

⁴ Mosheim, *Eccles. Hist.*, 2 Cent., Pt. II, c. i, §§ 4-12. Cp., however, Abbé Cognat, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 1859, pp. 421-3, and Ueberweg, i, 239, as to the obscurity resting on the original teaching of Ammonios.

⁵ Cp. Gieseler, *Compendium*, i, § 52 (trans. vol. i, p. 162).

⁶ *Id.*, §§ 54, 55, pp. 186-190.

⁷ *E. H.*, 3 Cent., Pt. II, c. i, §§ 2-4.

⁸ As to the earlier latitudinarianism, cp. Gieseler as cited, p. 166.

represented by Plotinus, Porphyry, and Hierocles,¹ declare itself against Christianity.

Among the church sects, as distinguished from the philosophic, the syncretic tendency was hardly less the vogue. Some of the leading Fathers of the second century, in particular Clement of Alexandria and Origen, show the Platonic influence strongly,² and are given, the later in particular, to a remarkably free treatment of the sacred books, seeing allegory wherever credence had been made difficult by previous science,³ or inconvenient by accepted dogma. But in the multiplicity of Gnostic sects is to be seen the main proof of the effort of Christians, before the complete collapse of the ancient civilisation, to think with some freedom on their religious problems.⁴ In the terms of the case—apart from the Judaising of the Elcesaites and Clemens Romanus—the thought is an adaptation of Pagan speculation, chiefly oriental and Egyptian; and the commonest characteristics are: (1) in theology, an explanation of the moral confusion of the world by assuming two opposed Powers,⁵ or by setting a variety of good and bad subordinate powers between the world and the Supreme Being; and (2) in ethics, an insistence

¹ Gieseler, § 55.

² Mosheim, *E. H.*, 3 Cent., Pt. II, c. iii, §§ 1-7; Gieseler, as cited, § 53, pp. 162-5; Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, vi, 19; B. Saint-Hilaire, *De l'école d'Alexandrie*, 1845, p. 7; Baur, *Church History*, Eng. trans., ii, 3-8. But cp. Cognat, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, l. v, ch. 5.

³ Cp. Mosheim on Origen, *Comm. de rebus Christ. ante Const.*, §§ 27, 28, summarised in Schlegel's note to *Ec. Hist.*, Reid's ed., pp. 100-1; Gieseler, § 63; Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 114, 140. Dr. Hatch (*Influence of Greek Ideas on the Christian Church*, pp. 82-83) notes that the allegorical method, which began in a tendency towards rationalism, came later to be typically orthodox.

⁴ "Gnosis was an attempt to convert Christianity into philosophy; to place it in its widest relation to the universe, and to incorporate with it the ideas and feelings approved by the best intelligence of the times." Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, p. 109. But cp. the *per contra* on p. 110: "it was but a philosophy in fetters, an effort of the mind to form for itself a more systematic belief in its own prejudices." Again (p. 115): "a reaction towards freethought was the essence of Gnosis." So also Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, Pt. i, pp. 4-5, 153.

⁵ This view could be supported by the Platonists from Plato, *Laws*, B. x. Cp. Chaignet, *La vie et les écrits de Platon*, 1871, p. 422; and Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, B. ii, c. v, ed. Paris, 1840, i, 288. It is explicitly set forth by Plutarch, *I. and O.*, cc. 45-49.

either on the inherent corruptness of matter or on the incompatibility of holiness with physical pleasure.¹ The sects influenced chiefly from Asia teach, as a rule, a doctrine of two great opposing Powers; those influenced from Egypt seek rather the solution of gradation of power under one chief God. All alike showed some hostility to the pretensions of the Jews. Thus:—

1. Saturninus of Antioch (second century) taught of a Good and an Evil Power, and that the world and man were made by the seven planetary spirits, without the knowledge or consent of either Power; both of whom, however, sought to take control, the Good God giving men rational souls, and subjecting them to seven Creators, one of whom was the God of the Jews. Christ was a spirit sent to bring men back to the Good God; but only their asceticism could avail to consummate the scheme. (Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, i, 24; Epiphanius, *Hæreses*, xxiii.)

2. Similarly Marcion (son of a bishop of Pontus) placed between the good and bad Powers the Creator of the lower world, who was the God and Lawgiver of the Jews, a mixed nature, but just; the other nations being subjects of the Evil Power. Jesus, a divine spirit sent by the Supreme God to save men, was opposed by both the God of the Jews and the Evil Power; and asceticism is the way to carry out his saving purpose. Of the same cast were the sects of Bardesanes and Tatian. (Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, i, 27, 28; Epiphanius, *Hæreses*, c. 56; Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, iv, 30. Mosheim, *E. H.*, 2 Cent., Pt. II, ch. v, §§ 7–9. As to Marcion see Harnack, *Outlines*, ch. 5; Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, Part III, §§ 7, 12, 13; Irenæus, iv, 29, 30; Tertullian, *Against Marcion*.)

3. The Manichean creed (attributed to the Persian Mani or Manichæus, third century) proceeded on the same dualistic lines. In this the human race had been created by the Power of Evil or Darkness, who is the God of the Jews, and hence the body and its appetites are primordially evil, the good element

¹ On the subject in general cp. Mosheim, *E. H.*, 2 Cent., Pt. II, c. v; also his *Commentaries on the Affairs of the Christians before Constantine*, Eng. trans., vol. ii; Harnack, *Outlines of the Hist. of Dogma*, ch. 4; King, *The Gnostics and their Remains*; Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, Part III, §§ 10, 11, 12; Renan, *L'Eglise Chrétienne*, cc. ix, x; Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, B. ii, c. 5; Lardner, *Hist. of Heretics*, in *Works*, ed. 1835, vol. viii; Baur, *Church History*, Pt. III; Jeremie, *Hist. of the Chr. Church in 2nd and 3rd Cent.*, ch. v. (in *Encyc. Metropolitana*).

being the rational soul, which is part of the Power of Light. By way of combining Christism and Mithraism, Christ is virtually identified with Mithra, and Manichæus claims to be the promised Paraclete. Ultimately the Evil Power is to be overcome, and kept in eternal darkness, with the few lost human souls. Here again the ethic is extremely ascetic, and there is a doctrine of purgatory. (Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, B. iii. ch. i; Mosheim, *E. H.*, 3 Cent., Pt. II, c. 5, §§ 2-11; Beausobre, *Hist. Critique de Manichée et du Manichéisme*, 1734; Lardner, *Cred. of the Gospels*, Pt. II, ch. 63.)

4. Among the Egyptian Gnostics, again, Basilides taught that the one supreme God produced seven perfect secondary Powers, called Æons (Ages), two of whom, Dynamis and Sophia (Power and Wisdom), procreated superior angels, who built a heaven, and in turn produced lower grades of angels, which produced others, till there were 365 grades, all ruled by a Prince named Abraxas (whose name yields the number 365). The lowest grades of angels, being close to eternal matter (which was evil by nature), made thereof the world and men. The Supreme God then intervened, like the Good Power in the oriental system, to give men rational souls, but left them to be ruled by the lower angels, of whom the Prince became God of the Jews. All deteriorated, the God of the Jews becoming the worst. Then the Supreme God sent the Prince of the Æons, Christ, to save men's souls. Taking the form of the man Jesus, he was slain by the God of the Jews. Despite charges to the contrary, this system too was ascetic, though lenient to paganism. Similar tenets were held by the sects of Carpocrates and Valentinus, all rising in the second century; Valentinus setting up Thirty Æons, male and female, in pairs, with four unmarried males, guardians of the Pleroma or Heaven—namely, Horus, Christ, the Holy Spirit *and* Jesus. The youngest Æon, Sophia, brought forth a daughter, Achamoth (*Scientia*), who made the world out of rude matter, and produced Demiourgos, the Artificer, who further manipulated matter. (Irenæus, B. i, cc. 24, 25; B. ii.)

These sects in turn split into others, with endless peculiarities.

Such was the relative freethought of credulous theosophic fantasy,¹ turning fictitious data to fresh purpose by way of solving the riddle of the painful earth. The

¹ "Mysticism itself is but an insane rationalism" (Hampden, Bampton Lect. on *Scholastic Philosophy*, 3d. ed., intr. p. liii). It may be described as freethought without regard to evidence—that "lawless thought" which Christian polemicists are wont to ascribe to rationalists.

problem was to account for evil consistently with a Good God ; and the orientals, inheriting a dualistic religion, adapted that ; while the Egyptians, inheriting a syncretic monotheism, set up grades of Powers between the All-Ruler and men, on the model of the grades between the Autocrat, ancient or modern, and his subjects. The Manichæans, the most thoroughly organised of all the outside sects, appear to have absorbed many of the adherents of the great Mithraic religion, and held together for centuries, despite fierce persecution and hostile propaganda, their influence subsisting till the Middle Ages.¹ The other Gnosticisms fared much worse. Lacking sacred books, often setting up a severe ethic as against the frequently loose practice of the churches,² and offering a creed unsuited to the general populace, all alike passed away before the competition of the organised Church, which founded on the Canon³ and the concrete dogmas, with many pagan rites and beliefs⁴ and a few great pagan abracadabras added.

§ 4.

More persistently dangerous to the ancient Church were the successive efforts of the struggling spirit of reason within to rectify in some small measure its most arbitrary dogmas. Of these efforts the most prominent were the quasi-Unitarian doctrine of ARIUS (fourth

¹ Gieseler, §§ 61, 86 (pp. 228, 368, 370).

² In the fourth century and later, however, the gospel of asceticism won great orthodox vogue through the writings of the so-called Dionysius the Areopagite. Cp. Mosheim, 4 Cent., Part II, c. iii, § 12 ; Westcott, *Religious Thought in the West*, 1891, pp. 190-1.

³ Compare the process by which the Talmudic system unified Judaism. Wellhausen, *Israel*, as cited pp. 541-2 ; Milman, *History of Christianity*, B. ii, c. 4. Ed. Paris, 1840, i, 276.

⁴ "There is good reason to suppose that the Christian bishops multiplied sacred rites for the sake of rendering the Jews and the pagans more friendly to them" (Mosheim, *E. H.*, 2 Cent., Pt. II, c. iv. Cp. c. iii, § 17 ; c. iv, §§ 3-7 ; 4 Cent., Pt. II, c. iii, §§ 1-3 ; c. iv, §§ 1-2 ; 5 Cent., Pt. II, c. iii, § 2). This generalisation is borne out by nearly every other Church historian. Cp. Harnack, *Outlines*, Pt. II, B. i, c. i ; Milman, B. iv, c. 5, pp. 367-374 ; Gieseler, §§ 98, 99, 101, 104 ; Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, 3e edit., p. 630. Baur, *Church History*, Eng. trans., ii, 285-9.

century), and the opposition by PELAGIUS and his pupil CÆLESTIUS (early in fifth century) to the doctrine of hereditary sin and predestinate salvation or damnation—a Judaic conception dating in the church from Tertullian, and unknown to the Greeks.¹

The former was the central and one of the most intelligible conflicts in the vast medley of early discussion over the nature of the Person of the Founder—a theme susceptible of any conceivable formula, when once the principle of deification was adopted. Between the Gnosticism of Athenagoras, which made the Logos the direct manifestation of Deity, and the Judaic view that Jesus was “a mere man,” for stating which the Byzantine Theodotos was excommunicated at Rome by Bishop Victor² in the third century, there were a hundred possible fantasies of discrimination ;³ and the record of them is a standing revelation of the intellectual delirium in the ancient Church. Arianism itself, when put on its defence, pronounced Jesus to be God, after beginning by declaring him to be merely the noblest of created beings, and thus became merely a modified mysticism, fighting for the conception *homoiousios* (of similar nature) as against that of *homousios* (of the same nature).⁴ Even at that, the sect split up, its chief dissenters ranking as semi-Arians, and many of the latter at length drifting back to Nicene orthodoxy.⁵ At first strong in the east, where it persecuted when it could, it was finally suppressed, after endless strifes, by Theodosius at the end of the fourth century ; only to reappear in the West as the creed of

¹ Gieseler, § 87, p. 373 ; Hagenbach, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3te Aufl. § 108.

² Gieseler, § 60, p. 218.

³ Cp. Gieseler, §§ 80–83, pp. 328–353 ; Harnack, *Outlines*, Pt. II, B. i, esp. pp. 201–2.

⁴ In the end the doctrine declared orthodox was the opposite of what had been declared orthodox in the Sabellian and other controversies (Mosheim, 4 Cent. Pt. II, c. v, § 9) ; and all the while “the Arians and the orthodox embraced the same theology in substance” (Murdock, note on Mosheim, Reid’s ed., p. 161). An eminent modern Catholic, however, has described Arianism as “a deistic doctrine which *had not the courage to bury itself in the fecund obscurities of dogma*” (Ozanam, *La Civilisation chrétienne chez les Francs*, 1849, p. 35).

⁵ Gieseler, § 83, p. 345.

the invading Goths and Lombards. In the east it had stood for ancient monotheism ; in the west it prospered by early missionary and military chance till the Papal organisation triumphed.¹ Its suppression meant the final repudiation of rationalism ; though it had for the most part subsisted as a fanaticism, no less than did the Nicene creed.

More philosophical, and therefore less widespread, was the doctrine associated in the second century with the name of Praxeas, in the third with those of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata, and in the fourth with that of Photinus. Of this the essence was the conception of the triune deity as being not three persons but three modes or aspects of one person—a theorem welcomed in the later world by such different types of believer as Servetus, Hegel, and Coleridge. Far too reasonable for the average believer, and far too unpropitious to ritual and sacraments for the average priest, it was always condemned by the majority, though it had many adherents in the east, until the establishment of the Church made Christian persecution a far more effective process than pagan persecution had ever been.

Pelagianism, which unlike Arianism was not an ecclesiastical but a purely theological division,² fared better, the problem at issue involving the permanent crux of religious ethics. Augustine, whose supreme talent was for the getting up of a play of dialectic against every troublesome movement in turn, without regard to his previous positions,³ undertook to confute Pelagius and Cælestius as he did every other innovator ; and his influence was such that, after they had been acquitted of heresy by a church council in Palestine and by the Roman pontiff, the latter was induced to change his

¹ Cp. the author's *Short History of Christianity*, pp. 176–181.

² "Pelagianism is Christian rationalism" (Harnack, *Outlines*, Pt. II, B. ii, c. iv, § 3, p. 364).

³ He was first a Manichean ; later an anti-Manichean, denying predestination ; later, as an opponent of the Pelagians, an assertor of predestination. Cp. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, Pt. V, § 15. As to his final Manicheanism, see Milman, *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, 3rd ed., i, 152.

ground and condemn them, whereupon many councils followed suit, eighteen Pelagian bishops being deposed in Italy. At that period, Christendom, faced by the portent of the barbarian conquest of the empire, was well adjusted to a fatalistic theology, and too uncritical in its mood to realise the bearing of such doctrine either on conduct or on sacerdotal pretensions. But though the movement in its first form was thus crushed, and though in later forms it fell considerably short of the measure of ethical rationalism seen in the first, it soon took fresh shape in the form of so-called semi-Pelagianism, and so held its ground while any culture subsisted ;¹ while Pelagianism on the theme of the needlessness of "prevenient grace," and the power of man to secure salvation of his own will, has been chronic in the church.

For a concise view of the Pelagian tenets see Murdock's note on Mosheim, following Walch and Schlegel (Reid's edition, pp. 208-9). They included (1) denial that Adam's sin was inherited ; (2) assertion that death is strictly natural, and not a mere punishment for Adam's sin ; (3) denial that children and virtuous adults dying unbaptised are damned, a middle state being provided for them ; (4) assertion that good acts come of a good will, and that the will is free ; grace being an enlightenment of the understanding, and not indispensable to all men. The relative rationalism of these views is presumptively to be traced to the facts that Pelagius was a Briton and Cælestius an Irishman, and that both were Greek scholars. (When tried in Palestine they spoke Greek, like the council, but the accuser could speak only Latin.) They were thus bred in an atmosphere not yet laden with Latin dogma. In "confuting" them, Augustine developed the doctrine (intelligible as that of an elderly polemist in a decadent society) that all men are predestined to salvation or damnation by God's "mere good pleasure"—a demoralising formula which he at times hedged with illogical qualifications. (Cp. Murdock's note on Mosheim, as cited, p. 210 ; Gieseler, § 87.) But an orthodox champion of Augustine describes him as putting the doctrine without limitations (Rev. W. R. Clarke, *St. Augustine*, in "The Fathers for English Readers" series, p. 132). It was never adopted in the East (Gieseler, p. 387), but became part of

¹ Cp. Harnack, *Outlines*, Pt. II, B. II, c. v, § 1 (p. 386).

Christian theology, especially under Protestantism. On the other hand, the Council of Trent erected several Pelagian doctrines into articles of faith; and the Protestant churches have in part since followed. See Sir W. Hamilton's *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature*, 1852, pp. 493-4, *note*; and Milman, *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, i, 142, 149.

The Latin Church thus finally maintained in religion the tradition of sworn adherence to sectarian formulas which has been already noted in the Roman philosophic sects, and in so doing reduced to a minimum the exercise of the reason, alike in ethics and in philosophy. Its dogmatic code was shaped under the influence of (1) Irenæus and Tertullian, who set Scripture above reason and, when pressed by heretics, tradition above even Scripture,¹ and (2) Augustine, who had the same tendencies, and whose incessant energy secured him a large influence. That influence was used not only to dogmatise every possible item of the faith, but to enforce in religion another Roman tradition, formerly confined to politics—that of systematic coercion of heretics. Before and around Augustine there had indeed been abundant mutual persecution of the bitterest kind between the parties of the church as well as against pagans; the Donatists, in particular, with their organisation of armed fanatics, the Circumcelliones, had inflicted and suffered at intervals all the worst horrors of civil war in Africa during a hundred years; Arians and Athanasians came again and again to mutual bloodshed; and the slaying of the pagan girl-philosopher, Hypatia,² by the Christian monks of Alexandria is one of the vilest episodes in the whole history of religion. On the whole, it is past question that the amount of homicide wrought by all the pagan persecution of the earlier Christians was not a tithe of that wrought by their successors in their own quarrels. But the spirit which had so operated, and which had

¹ Cp. Hampden, Bampton Lectures on *The Scholastic Philosophy*, 1848, pp. xxxv-xxxvi, and refs.

² Sokrates, *Eccles. Hist.*, B. vii, c. 15.

been repudiated even by the bitter Tertullian, was raised by Augustine to the status of a Christian dogma,¹ which, of course, had sufficient support in the Sacred Books, Judaic and Jesuist, and which henceforth inspired such an amount of murderous persecution in Christendom as the ancient world had never seen. When, the temple revenues having been already confiscated, the pagan worships were finally overthrown and the temples appropriated by the edict of Honorius in the year 408, Augustine, "though not entirely consistent, disapproved of the forcible demolition of the temples."² But he had nothing to say against the forcible suppression of their worship, and of the festivals. Ambrose went as far;³ and such men as Firmicus Maternus would have had the emperors go much further.⁴

Economic interest had now visibly become at least as potent in the shaping of the Christian course as it had ever been in building up a pagan cult. For the humble conditions in which the earlier priests and preachers had gained a livelihood by ministering to scattered groups of poor proselytes, there had been substituted those of a State Church, adopted as such because its acquired range of organisation had made it a force fit for the autocrat's purposes when others had failed. The sequent situation was more and more unfavourable to both sincerity of thought and freedom of speech. Not only did thousands of wealth-seekers promptly enter the priesthood to profit by the new endowments allotted by Constantine to the great

¹ *Epist.* 93. Cp. Schlegel's notes on Mosheim, in Reid's ed., pp. 159, 198; Rev. W. R. Clarke, *Saint Augustine*, pp. 86-87 (a defence); Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, B. ii, c. 2, 3d. ed., i, 163; Boissier, *La fin du paganisme*, 2e édit., i, 69-79. Harnack's confused and contradictory estimate of Augustine (*Outlines*, Pt. II, B. II., cc. iii, iv) ignores this issue. He notes, however (pp. 362-3), some of Augustine's countless self-contradictions.

² Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, B. iii, c. 8; ed. cited, ii, 182, 188, and *note*. For the views of Ambrose, see p. 184. In Gaul, St. Martin put down the old shrines by brute force. *Id.* p. 179.

³ Cp. Beugnot, *Histoire de la destruction du paganisme en Occident*, 1835, i, 430.

⁴ *De errore profanarum religionum*, end.

metropolitan churches. Almost as promptly the ideal of toleration was renounced; and the Christians began against the pagans a species of persecution that pretended to no higher motive than greed of gain. Not only were the revenues of the temples confiscated as we have seen, but a number of Christians took to the business of plundering pagans in the name of the laws of Constantius forbidding sacrifice, and confiscating the property of the temples. Libanius, in his *Oration for the Temples*¹ (390), addressed to Theodosius, circumstantially avers that the bands of monks and others who went about demolishing and plundering temples were also wont to rob the peasants, adding:—

They also seize the lands of some, saying “it is sacred”; and many are deprived of their paternal inheritance upon a false pretence. Thus those men thrive upon other people’s ruin who say “they worship God with fasting.” And if they who are wronged come to the pastor in the city.....he commends (the robbers) and rejects the others.....Moreover, if they hear of any land which has anything that can be plundered, they cry presently, “Such an one sacrificeth, and does abominable things, and a troop ought to be sent against him.” And presently the self-styled reformers (σωφρονισται) are there..... Some of these.....deny their proceedings.....Others glory and boast and tell their exploits.....But they say, “We have only punished those who sacrifice, and thereby transgress the law, which forbids sacrifice.” O emperor, when they say this, they lie.....Can it be thought that they who are not able to bear the sight of a collector’s cloak should despise the power of your government?.....I appeal to the guardians of the law [to confirm the denial].²

The whole testimony is explicit and weighty,³ and, being corroborated by Ammianus Marcellinus, is accepted by clerical historians.⁴ Ammianus declares that some of

¹ See it translated in full by Lardner, in his *Testimonies of Ancient Heathens*, ch. 49. *Works*, ed. 1835, vol. viii.

² Lardner, as cited, pp. 25–27.

³ As to the high character of Libanius, who used his influence to succour his Christian friends in the reign of Julian, see Lardner, pp. 15–17.

⁴ Milman, *Hist. of Christianity*, B. iii, c. 6: vol. ii, p. 131. See the passage there cited from the Funeral Oration of Libanius *On Julian*, as to Christians building houses with temple stones; also the further passages, pp. 129, 161, 212, of Mr. King’s trans. of the Oration in his *Julian the Emperor* (Bohn Lib.).

the courtiers of the Christian emperors before Julian were "glutted with the spoils of the temples."¹

The official creed, with its principle of rigid uniformity and compulsion, is now recognisable as the only expedient by which the church could be held together for its economic ends. Under the Eastern Empire, accordingly, when once a balance of creed was attained in the church, the same coercive ideal was enforced, with whatever differences in the creed insisted on. Whichever phase of dogma was in power, persecution of opponents went on as a matter of course.² Athanasians and Arians, Nestorians and Monophysites, used the same weapons to the utmost of their scope; Cyril of Alexandria led his fanatics to the pillage and expulsion of the Jews, as his underling Peter led them to the murder of Hypatia; other bishops wrought the destruction of temples throughout Egypt;³ Theodosius, Marcian, St. Leo, Zeno, Justinian, all used coercion against every heresy without a scruple, affirming every verbal fantasy of dogma at the point of the sword. It was due to no survival of the love of reason that some of the more stubborn heresies, driven into communion with the new civilisation of the Arabs, were the means of carrying some of the seeds of ancient thought down the ages, to fructify ultimately in the mental soil of modern Europe.

§ 5.

Against the orthodox creed, apart from social and official hostility, there had early arisen critics who reasoned in terms of Jewish and pagan beliefs, and in terms of such rationalism as survived. Of the two former sorts some remains have been preserved, despite the tendency of the church to destroy their works. Of the latter, apart from Lucian, we have traces in the Fathers and in the Neo-Platonists.

¹ Ammianus, xxii, 4.

² Gibbon, c. 47. Bohn ed. v, 211-252, 264, 268, 272. Mosheim, *passim*.

³ Milman, as cited, p. 178.

Thus Tertullian¹ speaks of some who believe in a non-active and passionless God, and disdain those who turn Christian out of fear of a hereafter; and again² of Stoics who deride the belief in demons. Jamblichos, too,³ speaks of opponents of the worship of the Gods in his day (early in the fourth century).⁴ In the fifth century, again, Augustine argues bitterly against the *increduli* and *infideles* who would not believe in immortality and the possibility of eternal torment;⁵ and he meets them in a fashion which constantly recurs in Christian apologetics, pointing to natural anomalies, real or alleged, and concluding that since we cannot understand all we see we should believe all we hear—from the church. In the same way he meets⁶ their protest against the iniquity of eternal punishment by a juggle over the ostensible anomaly of long punishments by human law for short misdeeds. Such arguments were doubtless potent to stupefy what remained of critical faculty in the Roman world. In the same period Salvian makes a polemic against those who in Christian Gaul denied that God exercised any government on earth.⁷ They seem, however, to have been normal Christians driven to this view by the barbarian invasions. Fronto, the tutor of Marcus Aurelius, again, seems to have attacked the Christians partly as rationalist, partly as conservative.⁸

In general, the orthodox polemic is interesting only in so far as it preserves that of the opposition. The *Dialogue with Trypho* by Justin Martyr (about 150) is a mere documental discussion between a Christian and a Jew, each founding on the Hebrew Scriptures, and the

¹ *De Testimonio Animæ*, c. 2.

² c. 3.

³ *On the Mysteries*, B. x, c. 2.

⁴ Cp. Minucius Felix (2nd c.), *Octavius*, c. 5.

⁵ *De civ. Dei*, xxi, 2, 5-7.

⁶ *Id.* xxi, 11.

⁷ *De Gubernatione Dei*, l. 4.

⁸ See Renan, *L'Église Chrétienne*, p. 493. As to Crescens, the enemy of Justin Martyr (2 *Apol.*, c. 3), see *id.*, p. 492. Cp. Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes*, *passim*, as to pagan objections. What remains of Porphyry will be found in Lardner's *Testimonies of the Heathen*, ch. 37. Cp. Baur, *Church History*, Eng. trans., ii, 179-187.

Christian doing nearly all of the argument. There is not a scintilla of independent rationalism in the whole tedious work.¹ Justin was a type of the would-be "philosopher" who confessedly would take no trouble to study science or philosophise, but who found his sphere in an endless manipulation of the texts of Sacred Books. But the work of the learned Origen *Against Celsus* preserves for us a large part of the *True Discourse* of Celsus, a critical and extremely well-informed argument against Christianity by a pagan of the Platonic² school in the time of Marcus Aurelius,³ on grounds to a considerable extent rationalistic.⁴ The line of rejoinder followed by Origen, one of the most cultured of the Christian Fathers, is for the most part otherwise. When Celsus argues that it makes no difference by what name the Deity is called, Origen answers⁵ that on the contrary certain God-names have a miraculous or magical virtue for the casting out of evil spirits; that this mystery is known and practised by the Egyptians and Persians; and that the mere name of Jesus has been proved potent to cast out many such demons. When, on the other hand, Celsus makes a Jew argue against the Christist creed on the basis of the Jewish story that the founder's birth was illegitimate,⁶ the Father's answer begins in sheer amiable ineptitude,⁷ which soon passes into shocked outcry.⁸ In other passages he is more successful, as when he convicts Celsus' Jew of arguing alternately that the disciples were deceived and that they were deceivers.⁹ This part of the discussion is interesting chiefly as showing how educated Jews combated the Gospels in detail, at a

¹ The *Controversy between Jason and Papiscus regarding Christ*, mentioned by Origen (*Ag. Celsus*, B iv, c. 4), seems to have been of the same nature.

² Origen repeatedly calls him an Epicurean; but this is obviously false. The Platonising Christian would not admit that a Platonist was anti-Christian.

³ Origen places him in the reign of Hadrian; but the internal evidence is all against that opinion. Kain dates the treatise 177-8.

⁴ Cp. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, 3e édit., pp. 346-371.

⁵ B. i, cc. 24, 25.

⁶ B. i, cc. 28, 32.

⁷ c. 32.

⁸ cc. 37, 39.

⁹ B. ii, c. 26.

level of criticism not always above that of the believers. Sometimes the Jew's case is shrewdly put, as when he asks,¹ "Did Jesus come into the world for this purpose, that we should not believe him?"—a challenge not to be met by Origen's theology. One of the acutest of Celsus' thrusts is the remark that Jesus himself declared that miracles would be wrought after him by followers of Satan, and that the argument from miracles is thus worthless.² To this the rejoinder of Origen is suicidal; but at times the assailant, himself a believer in all manner of miracles, gives away his advantage completely enough.

Of a deeper interest are the sections in which Celsus (himself a believer in a Supreme Deity and a future state, and in a multitude of lower Powers, open to invocation) rests his case on grounds of general reason, arguing that the true Son of God must needs have brought home his mission to all mankind;³ and sweeps aside as foolish the whole dispute between Jews and Christians,⁴ of which he had given a sample. Most interesting of all are the chapters⁵ in which the Christian cites the pagan's argument against the homocentric theory of things. Celsus insists on the large impartiality of Nature, and repudiates the fantasy that the whole scheme is adjusted to the well-being and the salvation of man. Here the Christian, standing for his faith, may be said to carry on, though in the spirit of a new fanaticism, the anti-scientific humanism first set up by Sokrates; while the pagan, though touched by religious apriorism and prone to lapse from logic to mysticism in his turn, approaches the scientific standpoint of the elder thinkers who had set religion aside.⁶ Not for thirteen hundred years was his standpoint to be regained among men. His protest against the Christian cultivation of blind faith,⁷ which Origen tries to meet on rationalistic lines, would in a

¹ B. ii, c. 78.

² B. ii, c. 49.

³ B. ii, c. 30.

⁴ B. iii, c. i.

⁵ B. iv, cc. 23-30, 54-60, 74.

⁶ Cp. A. Kind, *Teleologie und Naturalismus in der altchristlichen Zeit*, 1875; Soury, *Bréviaire de l'histoire du Matérialisme*, pp. 331-340.

⁷ B. i, cc. 9-11; iii, 44.

later age be regarded as conveying no imputation. Even the simple defensive subtleties of Origen are too rationalistic for the succeeding generations of the orthodox. The least embittered of the Fathers, he is in his way the most reasonable ; and in his unhesitating resort to the principle of allegory wherever his documents are too hard for belief, we see the last traces of the spirit of reason as it had been in Plato, not yet paralysed by faith. Henceforth, till a new intellectual life is set up from without, Christian thought is more and more a mere disputation over the unintelligible, in terms of documents open always to opposing constructions.

Against such minds, the strictest reason would be powerless ; and it was fitting enough that LUCIAN, the last of the great freethinkers of the Hellenistic world, should merely turn on popular Christianity some of his serene satire¹—more, perhaps, than has come down to us ; though, on the other hand, his authorship of the *De Morte Peregrini*, which speaks of the “crucified sophist,” has been called in question.² The forcible-feeble dialogue *Philopatris*, falsely attributed to Lucian, and clearly belonging to the reign of Julian, is the last expression of general skepticism in the ancient literature. The writer, a bad imitator of Lucian, avows disbelief alike in the old Gods and in the new, and professes to respect, if any, the “Unknown God” of the Athenians ; but he makes no great impression of intellectual sincerity. Apart from this, and the lost anti-Christian work³ of Hierocles, governor of Bithynia under Diocletian, the last direct literary opponents of ancient Christianity were Porphyry and Julian. As both were

¹ Cp. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 373-7.

² Christian excisions have been suspected in the *Peregrinus*, § 11 (Bernays, *Lucian und die Kyniker*, 1879, p. 107). But see Mr. J. M. Cotterill's *Peregrinus Proteus*, Edinburgh, 1879, for a theory of the spuriousness of the treatise, which is surmised to be a fabrication of Henri Etienne.

³ *Logoi Philaletheis*, known only from the reply of Eusebius, *Contra Hieroclem*. Hierocles made much of Apollonius of Tyana, as having greatly outdone Jesus in miracles, while ranking simply as a God-beloved man.

believers in many Gods, and opposed Christianity because it opposed these, neither can well rank on that score as a freethinker, even in the sense in which the speculative Gnostics were so. The bias of both, like that of Plutarch, seems to have been to the utmost latitude of religious belief; and, apart from personal provocations and the ordinary temper of religious conservatism, it was the exiguity of the Christian creed that repelled them. Porphyry's treatise, indeed, was answered by four Fathers,¹ all of whose replies have disappeared, doubtless in fulfilment of the imperial edict for the destruction of Porphyry's book—a dramatic testimony to the state of mental freedom under Theodosius II.² What is known of his argument is preserved in the incidental replies of Jerome, Augustine, Eusebius, and others.³ The answer of Cyril to Julian has survived, probably in virtue of Julian's status. His argumentations against the unworthy elements, the exclusiveness, and the absurdities of the Jewish and Christian faith are often reasonable enough, as doubtless were those of Porphyry;⁴ but his own theosophic positions are hardly less vulnerable; and Porphyry's were probably no better, to judge from his preserved works. Yet it is to be said that the habitual tone and temper of the two men compares favourably with that of the polemicists on the other side. They had inherited something of the elder philosophic spirit, which is so far to seek in patristic literature, outside of Origen.

The latest expressions of rationalism among churchmen were to the full as angrily met by the champions of

¹ Methodius, Eusebius, Apollinaris, and Philostorgius.

² Cod. Justin., *De Summa Trinitate*, l. I, tit. i, c. 3.

³ Citations are given by Baur, *Ch. Hist.*, ii, 180 sq.

⁴ Cp. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, p. 160. Chrysostom (*De Mundi Creatione*, vi, 3) testifies that Porphyry "led many away from the faith." He ably anticipated the "higher criticism" of the Book of Daniel. See Baur as cited. Porphyry, like Celsus, powerfully retorted on the Old Testament the attacks made by Christians on the immorality of pagan myths, and contemned the allegorical explanations of the Christian writers as mere evasions. The pagan explanations of pagan myths, however, were of the same order.

orthodoxy as the attacks of enemies ; and, indeed, there was naturally something of bitterness in the resistance of the last few critical spirits in the church to the fast-multiplying insanities of faith. Thus, at the end of the fourth century, the Italian monk JOVINIAN fought against the creed of celibacy and asceticism, and was duly denounced, vituperated, ecclesiastically condemned, and banished, penal laws being at the same time passed against those who adhered to him.¹ Contemporary with him was the Eastern AERIUS, who advocated priestly equality as against episcopacy, and objected to prayers for the dead, to fasts, and to the too significant practice of slaying a lamb at the Easter festival.² In this case matters went the length of schism. With less of practical effect, in the next century, VIGILANTIUS of Aquitaine made a more general resistance to a more manifold superstition, condemning and ridiculing the veneration of tombs and bones of martyrs, pilgrimages to shrines, the miracle stories therewith connected, and the practices of fasting, celibacy, and the monastic life. He, too, was promptly put down, largely by the efforts of his former friend Jerome, the most voluble and the most scurrilous pietist of his age, who had also denounced the doctrine of Jovinian.³ For centuries no such appeal was heard in the western Church.

The spirit of reason, however, is well marked at the beginning of the fifth century in a pagan writer who belongs more truly to the history of freethought than either Julian or Porphyry. MACROBIUS, a Roman patrician of the days of Honorius, works out in his *Saturnalia*, with an amount of knowledge and intelligence which for the time is remarkable, the principle

¹ Gieseler, § 106, ii, 75. Cp. Mosheim, 4 Cent., Pt. II, c. iii, § 22.

² Gieseler, § 106, vol. ii, p. 74 ; Mosheim, 4 Cent., Pt. II, c. iii, § 21 ; and Schlegel's note in Reid's ed., p. 152.

³ Milman, *Hist. of Chr.*, B. iii, c. 11 (ii, 268-270) ; Mosheim, 5 Cent., Pt. II, c. iii, § 14 ; Gilly, *Vigilantius and his Times*, 1844, pp. 8, 389 sq., 470 sq. As to Jerome's persecuting ferocity, see also Gieseler, ii, 65, *note*. For a Catholic polemic on Jerome's side, see Amedée Thierry, *Saint Jerome*, 2e édit., pp. 141, 363-6.

that all the Gods are but personifications of aspects or functions of the Sun. But such doctrine must have been confined, among pagans, to the cultured few ; and the monotheism of the same writer's treatise *On the Dream of Scipio* was probably not general even among the remaining pagans of the upper class.¹

After Julian, open rationalism being already extinct, anti-Christian thought was simply tabooed ; and though the leading historians for centuries were pagans, they only incidentally venture to betray the fact. It is told, indeed, that in the days of Valens and Valentinian an eminent physician named Posidonius, son of a great physician and brother of another, was wont to say, "that men do not grow fanatic by the agency of evil spirits, but merely by the superfluity of certain evil humours ; and that there is no power in evil spirits to assail the human race";² but though that opinion may be presumed to have been held by some other physicians, the special ascription of it to Posidonius is a proof that it was rarely avowed. With public lecturing forbidden, with the philosophic schools at Athens closed and plundered by imperial force,³ with heresy ostracised, with pagan worship, including the strong rival cult of Mithraism, outwardly suppressed by the same power,⁴ unbelief was naturally little heard of

¹ See a good account of the works of Macrobius in Professor Dill's *Roman Society in the last Century of the Western Empire*, B. i, ch. 4.

² Philostorgius, *Eccles. Hist. Epit.*, B. viii, c. 10.

³ By Justinian, in 529. The banished thinkers were protected by Chosroes in Persia, who secured them permission to return (Gibbon, Bohn ed., iv, 355-6 ; Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. Tozer, i, 277, 287). Theodosius II had already forbidden all public lectures by independent teachers (*Id.*, pp. 282-3).

⁴ Theodosius I, Arcadius, and Theodosius II (379-450) successively passed laws forbidding and persecuting paganism (Finlay, i, 286 ; Beugnot, *Hist. de la destr. du paganisme en occident*, i, 350 sq.). Mithraism was suppressed in the same period (Jerome, *Epist.* cvii, *ad Laetam*, Sokrates, *Eccles. Hist.*, B. v, c. 16). It is to be remembered that Constans and Constantius, the sons of Constantine, had commenced, at least on paper, to persecute paganism as soon as their father's new creed was sufficiently established (Cod. Theod., xvi, 10, 2, 4), and this with the entire approval of the whole Church. It was not their fault that it subsisted till the time of Theodosius II (cp. Gieseler, § 75, pp. 306-8 ; and Beugnot, i, 138-148). On the edict of Theodosius I, see Milman, B. iii, c. 8, as cited, p. 186.

after the fifth century. About its beginning we find Chrysostom boasting¹ that the works of the anti-Christian writers had persuaded nobody, and had almost disappeared. As regarded open teaching, it was only too true, though the statement clashes with Chrysostom's own complaint that Porphyry had led many away from the faith.² Proclus was still to come (410–485), with his eighteen *Arguments against the Christians*, proceeding on the principle, still [cherished from the old science, that the world was eternal. But such teaching could not reach even the majority of the more educated ; and the Jewish dogma of creation *ex nihilo* became sacrosanct truth for the darkening world. In the east, Eusebius,³ and in the west Lactantius,⁴ expressed for the whole Church a boundless contempt of everything in the nature of scientific research or discussion ; and it was in fact at an end for the Christian world for well-nigh a thousand years. For Lactantius, the doctrine of antipodes was mere nonsense : he discusses the thesis as might a self-satisfied savage.⁵ Proclus himself cherished some of the grossest pagan superstitions ; and the few Christians who had in them something of the spirit of reason, as Cosmas "Indicopleustes," "the Indian navigator," who belongs to the sixth century, were turned away from what light they had by their sacred books. Cosmas was a Nestorian, denying the divinity of Mary, and a rational critic as regards the orthodox fashion of applying Old Testament prophecies to Jesus.⁶ But whereas pagan science had inferred that the earth is a sphere, his Bible taught him that it is an oblong plain ; and the great aim of his *Topographia*

¹ *In S. Babylam, contra Julianum*, c. ii. Cp. his Hom. iv. on 1st Cor., Eng. trans., 1839, p. 42.

² There is also a suggestion in one passage of Chrysostom (Hom. in 1 Cor. vi, 2, 3) that some Christians tended to doubt the actuality of apostolic miracles, seeing that no miracles took place in their own day.

³ *Præparatio Evangelica*, xv, 61.

⁴ *Div. Inst.*, iii, 3.

⁵ *Id.*, iii, 24.

⁶ *Topographia*, lib. v, cited by Murdock in note on Mosheim, 5 Cent., Pt. II, ch. iii, § 5, Reid's ed., p. 192. Cp. same ed., p. 219, *note* ; and Gibbon, Bohn ed., iv, 259 ; v, 319.

Christiana, sive Christianorum opinio de mundo, was to prove this against those who still cultivated science.

Such pleadings were not necessary for the general Christian public, who knew nothing save what their priests taught them. In Chrysostom's day this was already the case. Save for a few quasi-rational heresies—such as that of Theodore of Mopsuestia (the teacher of Nestorius), who taught that many of the Old Testament prophecies commonly applied to Jesus had reference to pre-Christian events; that of Photinus, who taught that the Trinity was a matter not of persons, but of modes of deity;¹ and that of the Unitarian Anomeans or Eunomians, who condemned the worship of relics,² and whom Chrysostom himself denounced as unbelievers—the spirit of sane criticism had gone from the Christian world, with science, with art, with philosophy, with culture. But the verdict of time is given in the persistent recoil of the modern spirit from the literature of the age of faith to that of the elder age of nascent reason; and the historical outcome of the state of things in which Chrysostom rejoiced was the re-establishment of universal idolatry and practical polytheism in the name of the creed he had preached. Every species of superstition known to paganism subsisted, slightly transformed. While the emperors savagely punished the pagan soothsayers, the Christians held by the same fundamental delusion; and against the devices of pagan magic, in the reality of which they unquestioningly believed, they professed triumphantly to practise their own sorceries of holy water, relics, prayer, and exorcism, no man daring to impugn the insanities of faith.³ On the face of religious life, critical reason was extinct.

§ 6.

It might safely have been inferred, but it is a matter

¹ See Schlegel's note on Mosheim, 4 Cent., Pt. II., ch. v, § 19.

² Jerome, *Adv. Vigilantium*, cc. 9, 11.

³ Cp. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, viii, 15-19; xxi, 6; *De Trinitate*, iii, 12, 13 (7, 8); *Epist.* cxxxviii, 18-20; *Sermo* cc., *In. Epiph. Dom.* ii; Jerome, *Vita S. Hilarion.*, cc. 6, 37.

of proved fact, that, while the higher intellectual life was thus being paralysed, the primary intellectual virtues were attainted. As formerly in Jewry, so now in Christendom, the practice of pious fraud became normal: all early Christian literature, and most of the ecclesiastical history of many succeeding centuries, is profoundly compromised by the habitual resort to fiction, forgery, and interpolation. The mystical poetry of the pagans, the Jewish history of Josephus, the Gospels, the Epistles, all were interpolated in the same spirit as had inspired the production of new Gospels, new Epistles, new books of Acts, new Sibylline verses. And even where to this tendency there was opposed the growing demand of the organised church for a faithful text, when the documents had become comparatively ancient, the disposition to invent and suppress, to reason crookedly, to delude and mislead, was normal among churchmen. This is the verdict of orthodox ecclesiastical history, a dozen times repeated.¹ It of course carries no surprise for those who have noted the religious doctrine of Plato, of Polybius, of Cicero, of Varro, of Strabo, of Dion Cassius.

While intelligence thus retrograded under the reign of faith, it is impossible to maintain, in the name of historical science, the conventional claim that the faith wrought a countervailing good. What moral betterment there was in the decaying Roman world was a matter of the transformed social conditions, and belongs at least as much to paganism as to Christianity: even the asceticism of the latter, which in reality had no reformative virtue for society at large, was a pre-Christian as well as an anti-Christian phenomenon. It is indeed probable that in the times of persecution the Christian community would be limited to the more serious and devoted types²

¹ Mosheim, *E. H.*, 2 Cent. Pt. II, c. iii, §§ 8, 15; 3 Cent. Pt. I, c. i, § 5; Pt. II, c. iii, §§ 10, 11; 4 Cent. Pt. II, c. iii, §§ 3, 16; Gieseler, § 63, p. 235; Waddington, *Hist. of the Church*, 1833, pp. 38-39; Milman, *Hist. of Chr.*, B. iv, c. 3, ed. cited, ii, 337. Cp. Mackay, *Rise and Progress of Christianity*, pp. 11-12.

² Cp. the explicit admissions of Mosheim, *E. H.*, 2 Cent. Pt. II, c. iii, § 16; 3 Cent. Pt. II, c. ii, §§ 4, 6; 4 Cent. Pt. II, c. ii, § 8; c. iii,

—that is to say, to those who would tend to live worthily under any creed. But that the normal Christian community was superior in point of morals is a poetic hallucination, set up by the legends concerning the martyrs and by the vauntings of the Fathers, which are demonstrably untrustworthy. The assertion, still at times made by professed Positivists, that the discredit of the marriage tie in Roman life necessitated a new religion, and that the new religion was regenerative, is only a quasi-scientific variation of the legend.

The evidence as to the failure of the faith to reform its adherents is continuous from the first generation onwards. Paul complains bitterly of the sexual licence among his first Corinthian converts (1 Cor. v, 1, 2), and seeks to check it by vehement commands, some mystical (*id.* v. 5), some prescribing ostracism (27. 9–13)—a plain confession of failure, and a complete reversal of the prescription in the Gospel (Mt. xviii, 22). If that could be set aside, the command as to divorce could be likewise. Justin Martyr (*Dial. with Trypho*, c. 141) describes the orthodox Jews of his day as of all men the most given to polygamy and arbitrary divorce. (Cp. Deut. xxiv, 1; Ederheim, *History*, p. 294.) Then the Christian assumption as to Roman degeneration and Eastern virtue cannot be sustained.

At the beginning of the third century we have the decisive evidence of Tertullian that many of the charges of immorality made by serious pagans against Christians were in large part true. First he affirms (*Ad Nationes*, l. i, c. 5) that the Pagan charges are not true of all, “*not even* of the greatest part of us.” In regard to the charge of incest (c. 16), instead of denying it as the earlier apologist Minucius Felix had done, in the age of persecution, he merely argues that the same offence occurs *through ignorance* among the Pagans. The chapter concludes by virtually admitting the charge with regard to misconduct in “the mysteries.” Still later, when he has turned Montanist, Tertullian explicitly charges his former associates with sexual licence (*De Jejuniis*, cc. i, 17; *De Virginibus Velandis*, c. 14); pointing now to the heathen as showing more regard for monogamy than do the Christians (*De Exhort. Castitatis*, c. 13).

From the fourth century onward the history of the Church

§ 17; Gieseler, § 103, vol. ii, p. 56. It is to be noted, however, that even the martyrs were at times bad characters who sought in martyrdom remission for their sins (Gieseler, § 74, p. 206; De Wette, as there cited).

reveals at every step a conformity on the part of its members to average pagan practice. The third canon of the Nicene Council forbids clerics of all ranks from keeping as companions or housekeepers women who are not their close blood relations. In the fifth century Salvian denounces the Christians alike of Gaul and Africa as being boundlessly licentious in comparison with the Arian barbarians (*De Cubernatione Dei*, lib. 5, 6, 7). They do not even, he declares, deny the charge, contenting themselves with claiming superior orthodoxy. (Cp. Bury, *Hist. of the Later Roman Empire*, i, 198-9, and Finlay, ii, 219, for another point of view.) On all hands heresy was reckoned the one deadly sin (Gieseler, § 74, p. 295, and refs.), and all real misdeeds came to seem venial by comparison. As to sexual vice and crime among the Christianised Germans, see Gieseler, § 125, vol. ii, 158-160.

In the East the conditions were the same. The story of the indecent performances of Theodora on the stage (Gibbon, c. 40), probably untrue of her, implies that such practices openly occurred. Milman (*Hist. of Chr.*, B. iv, c. ii, ed. cited, ii, 327) recognises general indecency, and notes that Zosimus charged it on Christian rule. Salvian speaks of unlimited obscenity in the theatres of Christian Gaul (*De Gub. Dei*, l. 6). Cp. Gibbon as to the character of the devout Justinian's minister Trebonian; who, however, was called an atheist. (Suidas, s.v.) On the collapse of the iconoclastic movement, license became general (Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. Tozer, ii, 162). But even in the fourth century, Chrysostom's writings testify to the normality of all the vices, as well as the superstitions, that Christianity is supposed to have banished; the churches figuring, like the ancient temples, as places of assignation. (Cp. the extracts of Lavollée, *Les Mœurs Byzantines*, in *Essais de littérature et d'histoire*, 1891, pp. 48-62, 89; the S.P.C.K.'s *St. Chrysostom's Picture of his Age*, 1875, pp. 6, 94, 96, 98, 100, 102-4, 108, 194; Chrysostom's *Homilies*, Eng. trans. 1839, Hom. xii on 1st Cor., pp. 159-164; Jerome, *Adv. Vigilantium*, cited by Gieseler, ii, 66, note 19, and in Gilly's *Vigilantius and his Times*, 1844, pp. 406-7.) The clergy were among the most licentious of all, and Chrysostom had repeatedly to preach against them (Lavollée, ch. 4; Mosheim, as last cited; Gibbon, c. 47, Bohn ed. iv, 232). The position of women was practically what it had been in post-Alexandrian Greece and Asia-Minor (Lavollée, ch. 5; cp. *St. Chrysostom's Picture of his Age*, pp. 180-2); and the practice corresponded. In short, the supposition that the population of Constantinople as we see it under Justinian, or that of Alexandria in the same age, could have been morally austere, is fantastic.

It would indeed be unintelligible that intellectual decline without change of social system should put morals on a sound footing. The very asceticism which seeks to mortify the body is an avowal of the vice from which it recoils, and in so far as this has prevailed under Christianity it has specifically hindered general temperance,¹ inasmuch as the types capable of self-rule, thus leave no offspring.

On the other hand, with the single exception of the case of the gladiatorial combats (which had been denounced in the first century by the pagan Seneca,² and in the fourth by the pagan Libanius, but lasted in Rome long after Christianity had become the State religion ;³ while the no less cruel combats of men with wild beasts were suppressed only when the finances of the falling Empire could no longer maintain them),⁴ the vice of cruelty seems to have been in no serious degree cast out.⁵ Cruelty to slaves was certainly not less than in the Rome of the Antonines; and Chrysostom⁶ denounces just such atrocities by cruel mistresses as had been described by Horace and Juvenal. The story of the slaying of Hypatia, indeed, is decisive as to Christian ferocity.⁷

In fine, the entire history of Christian Egypt, Asia, and Africa, progressively decadent till their easy conquest by the Saracens, and the entire history of the Christian Byzantine empire, at best stagnant in mental and

¹ Cp. Gieseler, ii, 67-8.

² *Epist.* vii, 5 ; xcv, 33. Cp. Cicero, *Tusculans*, ii, 17.

³ Cp. the Bohn ed. of Gibbon, note by clerical editor, iii, 359.

⁴ The express declaration of Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei*, l. 6. On the general question compare Mr. Farrer's *Paganism and Christianity*, ch. 10 ; Milman, as last cited, p. 331 ; and Gieseler, ii, 71, note 6. The traditional view that the games were suppressed by Honorius, though accepted by Gibbon and by Professor Dill (*Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*, 2nd ed. p. 56), appears to be an error. Cp. Beugnot, *Destr. du Paganisme*, ii, 25 ; Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, i, 236.

⁵ As to the specially cruel use of judicial torture by the later Inquisition see H. C. Lea, *Superstition and Force*, 3d. ed., p. 452.

⁶ Lavollée, as cited, p. 92. Cp. *St. Chrysostom's Picture of his Age*, p. 112, and the admissions of Milman, B. iv, c. 1.

⁷ As to the spirit of hatred roused by controversy among believers, see Gieseler, § 104, vol. ii, pp. 64-67 ; and Ullmann's *Gregory of Nazianzum*, Eng. tr. 1851, pp. 177-180.

material life during the thousand years of its existence, serve conclusively to establish the principle that in the absence of freethought no civilisation can progress. More completely than any of the ancient civilisations to which they succeeded, they cast out or were denuded of the spirit of free reason. The result was strictly congruous. The process, of course, was in terms of sociopolitical causation throughout; and the rule of dogma was the symptom or effect of the process, not the extraneous cause. But that is only the clinching of the sociological lesson.

Of a deep significance, in view of the total historical movement, is the philosophical teaching of the last member of the ancient Roman world who exhibited philosophical capacity—the long famous BOETHIUS, minister of the conqueror Theodoric, who put him to death in the year 525. Ostensibly from the same hand we have the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, which is substantially non-Christian, and a number of treatises expounding orthodox Christian dogma. In the former “we find him in strenuous opposition.....to the Christian theory of creation; and his Dualism is at least as apparent as Plato’s. We find him coquetting with the anti-Christian doctrine of the immortality of the world, and assuming a position with regard to sin which is ultra-Pelagian and utterly untenable by a Christian theologian. We find him, with death before his eyes, deriving consolation not from any hopes of a resurrection.....but from the present contempt of all earthly pain and ill which his divine mistress, ‘the perfect solace of wearied souls,’ has taught him.”¹ Seeing that Theodoric, though a professed admirer of the ancient life, had absolutely put down, on pain of death,² every remaining religious practice of paganism, it is certain that Boethius must have officially professed Christianity; but his book seems to make it certain

¹ H. Fraser Stewart, *Boethius: an Essay*, 1891, pp. 100-1.

² Cp. Beugnot, *Destruction du Paganisme*, ii, 282-3.

that he was not a believer. The only theory on which the expounder of such an essentially pagan philosophy can be conceived as really the author of the Christian tractates ascribed to Boethius is that, under the stroke of undeserved ruin and unjust doom, the thinker turned away from the creed of his official life and sought healing in the wisdom of the older world.¹ Whether we accept this solution or, in despite of the specific testimony, reject the theological tractates as falsely ascribed—either by their writer or by others—to Boethius,² the significant fact remains that it was not the Christian tracts but the pagan *Consolation* that passed down to the western nations of the middle ages as the last great intellectual legacy from the ancient world. It had its virtue for an age of mental bondage, because it preserved some pulse of the spirit of free thought.

¹ *Id.* p. 159. Mr. Stewart in another passage (p. 106) argues that “*The Consolation* is intensely artificial”—this by way of explaining that it was a deliberate exercise, not representing the real or normal state of its author’s mind. Yet he has finally to avow (p. 107) that “it remains a very noble book”—a character surely incompatible with intense artificiality.

² This is the view of Maurice (*Medieval Philosophy*, 2nd ed. 1859, pp. 14–16), who decides that Boethius was neither a Christian nor a “pagan”—*i.e.*, a believer in the pagan Gods. This is simply to say that he was a rationalist—a “pagan philosopher,” like Aristotle. But, as is noted by Prof. Bury (ed. of Gibbon, iv, 199) Boethius’ authorship of a book *De sancta trinitate, et capita quædam dogmatica, et librum contra Nestorium*, is positively asserted in the *Anecdoton Holderi* (ed. by Usener, Leipzig, 1877, p. 4), a fragment found in a 10th century MS.

CHAPTER VIII.

FREETHOUGHT UNDER ISLAM¹

§ 1.

THE freethinking of Mohammed may be justly said to begin and end with his rejection of popular polytheism, and his acceptance of the idea of a single God. That idea he held as a kind of revelation, not as a result of any traceable process of reasoning; and he affirmed it from first to last as a fanatic. One of the noblest of fanatics he may be, but hardly more.

That the idea, in its most vivid form, reached him in middle age by way of a vision, is part of the creed of his followers; and that it derived in some way from Jews, or Persians, or Christians, as the early unbelievers declared,² is probable enough. But there is evidence that among his fellow-Arabs the idea had taken some slight root before his time, even in a rationalistic form, and it is clear that there were before his day many believers, though also many unbelievers, in a future state.³ The Moslems themselves preserved a tradition that one Zaid, who died five years before the Prophet received his first inspiration, had of his own accord renounced idolatry

¹ The strict meaning of this term, given by Mohammed ("the true religion with God is Islam": Sura iii, 17) is "submission"—such being the attitude demanded by the Prophet. "Moslem" means one who accepts Islam. Koran means strictly, not "book," but "reading" or recitation.

² Rodwell's trans. of the Koran, ed. 1861, pref. p. xv.

³ Sale, *Preliminary Discourse* to trans. of the Koran, ed. 1833, i, 42. Cp. Freeman, *History and Conquests of the Saracens*, 1856, p. 35. The late Professor Palmer, in introd. to his trans. of the Koran (Sacred Books of the East series), i, p. xv, says that "By far the greater number had ceased to believe in anything at all"; but this is an extravagance, confuted by himself in other passages—e.g., p. xi.

without becoming either Jew or Christian ; but on being told by a Jew to become a *Hanyf*,¹ that is to say, of the religion of Abraham, who worshipped nothing but God, he at once agreed.² In the oldest extant biography of Mohammed, an address of Zaid's has been preserved, of which six passages are reproduced in the Koran ;³ and there are other proofs⁴ that the way had been partly made for Mohammedanism before Mohammed. He uses the term *Hanyf* repeatedly as standing for his own doctrine.⁵ In the Arab poetry of the generation before Mohammed, again, there is "a deep conviction of the unity of God, and of his elevation over all other beings," as well as a clearly developed sense of moral responsibility.⁶ The doctrine of a Supreme God was indeed general ;⁷ and Mohammed's insistence on the rejection of the lesser deities or "companions of God" was but a preaching of unitarianism to half-professed monotheists who yet practised polytheism and idolatry. The Arabs at his time, in short, were on the same religious plane as the Christians, but with a good deal of unbelief ; "Zen-dekism" or rationalistic deism (or atheism) being charged

¹ The word means either convert or pervert : in Heb. and Syr. "heretic"; in Arabic, "orthodox." It must not be confounded with *Hanyfite*, the name of an orthodox sect, founded by one Hanyfa.

² See Rodwell's trans. of the Koran, ed. 1861, pref. pp. xvi, xvii ; and Sura xvi (lxxiii in Rodwell's chron. arrangement) v. 121, p. 252, note 2.

³ Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad*, 1861-65, i, 83, sq. Cp. p. 60, sq.

⁴ Rodwell, p. 497, note to Sura iii (xcvii) 19 ; and pref. p. xvi ; Caussin de Perceval, *Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'Islamisme*, 1847, i, 321-6. "To the great mass of the citizens of Mecca, the new doctrine was simply the Hanyfism to which they had become accustomed ; and they did not at first trouble themselves at all about the matter." Palmer, introd. to trans. of Koran, i, p. xxiv. Cp. Sprenger, as cited, i, 46-60, 65.

⁵ The word *Hanyf* or *Hanif* recurs in Sura ii, 129 ; iii, 60, 89 ; iv, 124 ; vi, 79, 162 ; x, 105 ; xvi, 121 ; xxii, 32 ; xxx, 29. Cp. H. Derenbourg, *La science des religions et l'Islamisme*, 1886, pp. 42-3. Palmer's translation, marred as it unfortunately is by slanginess, is on such points specially trustworthy. Rodwell's does not always indicate the use of the word *Hanyf* ; but the German version of Ullman, the French of Kasmirski, and Sale's, do not indicate it at all. Sprenger (p. 43) derives the *Hanyfs* from Essenes who had almost lost all knowledge of the Bible. Cp. p. 67.

⁶ Sprenger, as cited, p. 13.

⁷ Cp. Sale's *Prelim. Discourse*, as cited, i, 38 ; and Palmer, introd., p. xv.

in particular on Mohammed's tribe, the Koreish ;¹ and the Prophet used traditional ideas to bring them to his unitary creed. The several tribes were further to some extent monolatrous,² somewhat as were the Semitic tribes of Palestine ; and before Mohammed's time a special worshipper of the star Sirius sought to persuade the Koreish to give up their idols and adore that star alone. Thus between their partially developed monotheism, their partial familiarity with *Hanyf* monotheism, and their common intercourse with the nominally monotheistic Jews and Christians, the Arabs were in a measure prepared for the Prophet's doctrine ; which, for the rest, embodied many of their own traditions and superstitions as well as many orally received from Christians and Jews.

"The Koran itself is, indeed, less the invention or conception of Mohammed than a collection of legends and moral axioms borrowed from desert lore and couched in the language and rhythm of desert eloquence, but adorned with the additional charm of enthusiasm. Had it been merely Mohammed's own invented discourses, bearing only the impress of his personal style, the Koran could never have appealed with so much success to every Arab-speaking race as a miracle of eloquence."³

The final triumph of the religion, however, was due neither to the elements of its Sacred Book nor to the moral or magnetic power of the Prophet. This power it was that won his first adherents, who were mostly his friends and relatives, or slaves to whom his religion was a species of enfranchisement.⁴ From that point forward his success was military—thanks, that is, to the valour of his followers—his fellow citizens never having been won in mass to his teaching.⁵ Such success as his might conceivably be gained by a mere military chief. Nor

¹ Al Mostaraf, cited by Pococke, *Specimen Histor. Arab.*, p. 136 ; Sale, *Prelim. Disc.*, as cited, p. 45.

² Sale, as cited, pp. 39-41.

³ Palmer, introd. to his *Haroun Alraschid*, 1882, p. 14. Cp. Derenbourg, *La science des religions et l'islamisme*, p. 44, controverting Kuenen.

⁴ Rodwell, note to Sura xcvi (R. i), 10.

⁵ Sprenger estimates that at his death the number really converted to his doctrine did not exceed a thousand.

could the spread of Islam after his death have taken place save in virtue of the special opportunities for conquest lying before its adherents—opportunities already seen by Mohammed, either with the eye of statesmanship or with that of his great general, Omar.¹ It is an error to assume, as is still commonly done, that it was the unifying and inspiring power of the religion that wrought the Saracen conquests. Warlike northern barbarians overran the Western Empire without any such stimulus; the prospect of booty, and racial kinship,² sufficed them for the conquest of a decadent community; and the same conditions existed for the equally warlike Saracens, who also, before Mohammed, had learned something of the military art from the Græco-Romans.³ Their religious ardour would have availed them little against the pagan legions of unbelieving Cæsar; and as a matter of fact they could never conquer, though they curtailed, the comparatively weak Byzantine Empire; its moderate economic resources and traditional organisation sufficing to sustain it, despite intellectual decadence, till the age of Saracen greatness was over. Nor did their faith ever unify them save ostensibly, for purposes of common warfare against the racial foe—a kind of union attained in all ages and with all varieties of religion. Deadly domestic strifes broke out as soon as the Prophet was dead. It would be as true to say that the common racial and military interest against the Græco-Roman and Persian States unified the Moslem parties, as that Islam unified the Arab tribes and factions. Apart from the inner circle of converts, indeed, the first conquerors were

¹ Renan ascribes the idea wholly to Omar. *Études d'histoire et de critique*, ed. 1862, p. 250. The faithful have preserved a sly saying that "Omar was many a time of a certain opinion, and the Koran was then revealed accordingly." Nöldeke, *Enc. Brit.* art. on KORAN, in *Sketches from Eastern History*, 1892, p. 28. On the other hand, Sedillot decides (*Histoire des Arabes*, 1854, p. 60) that "in Mohammed it is the political idea that dominates."

² On the measure of racial unity set up by Abyssinian attacks as well as by the pretensions of the Byzantine and Persian empires, see Sedillot, pp. 30, 38. Cp. Van Vloten, *Recherches sur la domination arabe*, Amsterdam, 1894, pp. 1-4, 7.

³ Professor Stanilas Guyard, *La Civilisation Musulmane*, 1884, p. 22.

in mass not at all deeply devout, and many of them maintained to the end of their generation, and after his death, the unbelief which from the first met the Prophet at Mecca.¹ It is told of a Moslem chief of the early days that he said : "If there were a God, I would swear by his name that I did not believe in him."² A general fanaticism grew up later. But had there been no Islam, enterprising Arabs would probably have overrun Syria and Persia and Africa and Spain all the same.³ Attila went further, and he is not known to have been a monotheist or a believer in Paradise. Nor were Jenghiz Khan and Tamerlane indebted to religious faith for their conquests.

On the other hand, when a Khalifate was anywhere established by military force, the faith would indeed serve as a nucleus of administration, and further as a means of resisting the insidious propaganda of the rival faith, which might have been a source of political danger. It was their Sacred Book and Prophet that saved the Arabs from accepting the religion of the states they conquered as did the Goths and Franks. The faith thus so far preserved their military polity when that was once set up ; but it was not the faith that made the polity possible, or gave the power of conquest, as is conventionally held. At most, it partly facilitated their conquests by detaching a certain amount of purely superstitious support from the other side.

§ 2.

It may perhaps be more truly claimed for the Koran that it was the basis of Arab scholarship ; since it was in order to elucidate its text that the first Arab grammars and dictionaries and literary collections were made.⁴

¹ Cp. Renan, *Études*, pp. 257-266 ; Hauri, *Der Islam in seinem Einfluss auf das Leben seiner Bekenner*, 1882, pp. 64-65. It was at Medina that a strict Mohammedanism first arose.

² Hauri, *Der Islam*, p. 64.

³ Cp. Montesquieu, *Grandeur et décadence des Romains*, ch. 22.

⁴ Prof. Guyard, as cited, pp. 16, 51 ; C. E. Oelsner, *Des effets de la religion de Mohammed*, etc., 1810, p. 130.

Here again, however, the reflection arises that some such development would have occurred in any case, on the basis of the abundant pre-Islamic poetry, given but the material conquests. The first conquerors were illiterate, and had to resort to the services and the organisation of the conquered¹ for all purposes of administrative writing, using for a time even the Greek and Persian languages. There was nothing in the Koran itself to encourage literature; and the first conquerors either despised or feared that of the conquered.²

When the facts are inductively considered, it appears that the Koran was from the first rather a force of intellectual fixation than one of stimulus. As we have seen, there was a measure of rationalism as well as of monotheism among the Arabs before Mohammed; and the Prophet set his face violently against all unbelief. The word "unbeliever" or "infidel" in the Koran normally signifies merely "rejector of Mohammed"; but a number of passages³ show that there were specific unbelievers in the doctrine of a future state as well as in miracles; and his opponents put to him challenges which showed that they rationally disbelieved his claim to inspiration.⁴ Hence, clearly, the scarcity of miracles in his early legend, on the Arab side. On a people thus partly "refined, sceptical, incredulous,"⁵ whose poetry showed no trace of religion,⁶ the triumph of Islam gradually imposed a tyrannous dogma, entailing abundance of primitive superstition under the ægis of monotheistic doctrine. Some moral service it did compass, and for this the credit seems to be substantially due to Mohammed; though here again he was not an innovator. Like previous reformers,⁷ he vehemently denounced the

¹ Guyard, p. 21; Palmer, *Haroun Alraschid*, introd. p. 19.

² The alleged destruction of the library of Alexandria by Omar is probably a myth, arising out of a story of Omar's causing some Persian books to be thrown into the water. See Prof. Bury's notes in his ed. of Gibbon, v, 452-4. Cp. Oelsner, as cited, pp. 142-3.

³ Sura vi, 25, 29; xix, 67; xxvii, 68-70; liv, 2; lxxxiii, 10-13. According to lviii, 28, however, some polytheists denied the future state.

⁴ Cp. Renan, *Études d'histoire et de critique*, pp. 232-4.

⁵ Renan, as cited, p. 232.

⁶ *Id.*, p. 235.

⁷ Sedillot, p. 39.

horrible practice of burying alive girl children ; and when the Koran became law his command took effect. His limitation of polygamy, too, may have counted for something, despite the unlimited practice of his latter years. For the rest, he prescribes, in the traditional eastern fashion, liberal almsgiving ; this, with normal integrity and patience, and belief in "God and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Scriptures, and the Prophets,"¹ is the gist of his ethical and religious code, with much stress on hell-fire and the joys of Paradise, and at the same time on predestination, and with no reasoning on any issue.

§ 3.

The history of Saracen culture is the history of the attainment of saner ideas and a higher plane of thought. Within a century of the Hej'ra² there had arisen some rational scepticism in the Moslem schools, as apart from the chronic schisms and strifes of the faithful. A school of theology had been founded by Hasan-al-Basri at Bassorah ; and one of his disciples, Wasil ibn Attâ, following some previous heretics—Mabad al Jhoni, Ghailan of Damascus, and Jonas al Aswari³—rejected the predestination doctrine of the Koran as inconsistent with the future judgment ; arguing for free-will and at the same time for the humane provision of a purgatory. From this beginning dates the Motazileh or class of Motazilites (or Mu'tazilites),⁴ the philosophic reformers and freethinkers of Islam. Other sects of a semi-

¹ See the passage (Sura ii) cited with praise by the sympathetic Mr. Bosworth Smith in his *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, 2d ed., p. 181 ; where also delighted praise is given to the "description of Infidelity" in Sura xxiv, 39-40. The "infidels" in question were simply non-Moslems.

² The Flight (of the Prophet from Mecca, in 622), from which begins the Mohammedan era.

³ Sale, as cited, p. 160.

⁴ Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, ii, 261-4 ; Dugat, *Histoire des philosophes et des théologiens Mussulmans*, 1878, pp. 48-55 ; H. Steiner, *Die Mu'taziliten, oder die Freidenker im Islam*, 1865, pp. 49-50 ; Guyard, p. 36 ; Sale, p. 161 (sec. viii). The term Motazila broadly means "dissenter," or "belonging to a sect."

political character had arisen even during the last illness of the Prophet, and others soon after his death.¹ One party sought to impose on the faithful the "Sunna" or "traditions," which really represented the old Arabian ideas of law, but were pretended to be unwritten sayings of Mohammed.² To this the party of Ali (the Prophet's cousin) objected; whence began the long dispute between the Shiah or Shîtes (the anti-traditionists), and the Sunnites; the conquered Persians tending to stand with the former, and generally, in virtue of their own thought, to supply the heterodox element under the later Khalifates.³ Thus Shîtes were apt to be Motazilites.⁴ On Ali's side, again, there broke away a great body of Kharejites or Separatists, who claimed that the Imaum or head of the Faith should be chosen by election, while the Shîtes stood for succession by divine right.⁵ All this had occurred before any schools of theology existed.

The Motazilites, once started, divided gradually into a score of sects,⁶ all more or less given to rationalising within the limits of monotheism.⁷ The first stock were named *Kadarites*, because insisting on man's power (*kadar*) over his acts.⁸ Against them were promptly ranged the *Jabarites*, who affirmed that man's will was wholly under divine constraint (*jabar*).⁹ Yet another sect, the *Sifatites*, opposed both of the others, some of them¹⁰ standing for a literal interpretation of the Koran,

¹ Steiner, p. 1.

² Palmer, *Introd. to Haroun Alraschid*, p. 14.

³ As to the Persian influence on Arab thought, cp. A. Müller, *Der Islam*, i, 469; Palmer, as last cited; and Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, ii, 114 ff.

⁴ Weil, ii, 261.

⁵ G. Dugat, *Histoire des philosophes et des théologiens Mussulmans*, p. 44; Sale, pp. 161-1, 174-8.

⁶ Dugat, p. 55; Steiner, p. 4; Sale, p. 162.

⁷ "Motazilism represents in Islam a Protestantism of the shade of Schleiermacher" (Renan, *Averroès et l'Averroïsme*, 3e ed., p. 104). Cp. Syed Ameer Ali, *Crit. Exam. of Life of Mohammed*, pp. 300-8; Sale, p. 161.

⁸ Dugat, pp. 28, 44; Guyard, p. 36; Steiner, pp. 24-5; Renan, *Averroès*, p. 101. The Kadarites, as Sale notes (pp. 164-5), are really an older group than the Motazilites, so-called, their founder having rejected predestination before Wasil did.

⁹ Sale, pp. 165, 172-3.

¹⁰ For a view of the various schools of Sifatites see Sale, pp. 166-174.

which is in part predestinationist, and in parts assumes free will; while the main body of orthodox, following the text, professed to respect as insoluble mystery the contradictions they found in it.¹ The history of Islam in this matter is strikingly analogous to that of Christianity from the rise of the Pelagian heresy.

It is to be noted that, while the heretics in time came under Greek and other foreign influences, their criticism of the Koran was at the outset entirely their own.² The Shiites, becoming broadly the party of the Persians, admitted in time Persian, Jewish, Gnostic, Manichæan, and other dualistic doctrines, and generally tended to interpret the Koran allegorically.³ A particular school of allegorists, the Bathenians, even tended to purify the idea of deity in an agnostic direction.⁴ All of these would appear to have ranked generically as Motazilites; and the manifold play of heretical thought gradually forced a certain habit of reasoning on the orthodox,⁵ who as usual found their advantage in the dissidences of the dissenters. On the other hand, the Motazilites found new resources in the study and translation of Greek works, scientific and philosophical.⁶ They were thus the prime factors, on the Arab side, in the culture-evolution which went on under the Abasside Khalifs (750-1258). Greek literature reached them mainly through the Syrian Christians, in whose hands it had been put by the Nestorians, driven out of their scientific school at Edessa and exiled by Leo the Isaurian (716-741);⁷ possibly also in part through the philosophers who, on being exiled from Athens by Justinian, settled

¹ Guyard, pp. 37-38; G. D. Osborn, *The Khalifs of Baghdad*, 1878, p. 134.

² Steiner, p. 16. Major Osborn (work cited, p. 136) attributes their rise to the influence of Eastern Christianity, but gives no proof.

³ Guyard, p. 40. Cp. Sale, p. 176.

⁴ Dugat, p. 34. Thus the orthodox sect of Hanyfites were called by one writer followers of reason, since they relied rather on their judgment than on tradition.

⁵ Steiner, p. 5.

⁶ Steiner, pp. 5, 9, 88-9; Sale, p. 161.

⁷ Sedillot, *Hist. des Arabes*, p. 335; Professor A. Müller, *Der Islam* (in Oncken's series), i, 470; Ueberweg, i, 402.

for a time in Persia.¹ The total result was that already in the ninth century, within two hundred years of the beginning of Mohammed's preaching, the Saracens in Persia had reached not only a remarkable height of material civilisation, their wealth exceeding that of Byzantium, but a considerable though quasi-secret measure of scientific knowledge and rational thought,² including even some measure of pure atheism. All forms of rationalism alike were called *zendekism* by the orthodox, the name having the epithetic force of the Christian terms "infidelity" and "atheism."

Secrecy was long imposed on the Motazilites by the orthodoxy of the Khalifs,³ who as a rule atoned for many crimes and abundant breaches of the law of the Koran by a devout profession of faith. Freethinking, however, had its periods of political prosperity. Even under the Ommayade dynasty, the Khalif Al Walid Ibn Yazid (the eleventh of the race) was reputed to be of no religion, but seems to have been rather a ruffian than a rationalist.⁴ Under the Abassides, culture made much more progress. The Khalif Al Mansour, though he played a very orthodox part,⁵ favoured the Motazilites (754-775), being generally a patron of the sciences; and under him were made the first translations from the Greek.⁶ Despite his orthodoxy

¹ Ueberweg, p. 403; Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, ii, 281.

² For an orthodox account of the beginnings of freethinking (called *zendekism*) see Weil, ii, 214. Cp. p. 261; also Tabari's *Chronicle*, Pt. v, c. 97; and Renan, *Averroës*, p. 103. Already, among the Ommayade Khalifs, Yezid III held the Motazilite tenet of freewill. Weil, p. 260.

³ Steiner, p. 8. An association called "Brethren of Purity" or "Sincere Brethren" seem to have latterly carried Motazilism far, though they aimed at reconciling philosophy with orthodoxy. They were in effect the encyclopedists of Arab science. Ueberweg, i, 411. See Dr. F. Dieterici, *Die Naturanschauung und Naturphilosophie der Araber im 10ten Jahrhundert, aus den schriften der lautern Brüder*, 1861, Vorrede, p. viii, and Flügel, as there cited. Flügel dates the writings of the Brethren about 970; but the association presumably existed earlier. Cp. Renan, *Averroës*, p. 104; and S. Lane-Poole's *Studies in a Mosque*, 1893, ch. 6, as to their performance.

⁴ Sale, pp. 82-3, note.

⁵ He made five pilgrimages to Mecca, and died on the last, thus attaining to sainthood.

⁶ Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, ii, 81; Dugat, pp. 59-61; A. Müller, *Der Islam*, i, 470. In Mansour's reign was born Al Allaf, "Sheikh of the Motazilites."

he encouraged science ; and it was as insurgents and not as unbelievers that he destroyed the sect of Rewandites (a branch of the anti-Moslem Ismailites), who are said to have believed in metempsychosis.¹ Partly on political but partly also on religious grounds his successor Al Mahdi made war on the Ismailites, whom he regarded as atheists, destroying their books and causing others to be written against them.² They were anti-Koranites ; hardly atheists ; but a kind of informal rationalism approaching to atheism, and involving unbelief in the Koran and the Prophet, seems to have spread considerably, despite the slaughter of many unbelievers by Al Mahdi. Its source seems to have been Persian aversion to the alien creed.³ The great philosophic influence, again, was that of Aristotle ; and though his abstract God-idea was nominally adhered to, the scientific movement promoted above all things the conception of a reign of law.⁴ Al Hadi, the successor of Al Mahdi, persecuted much and killed many heretics ; and Haroun Alraschid (Aaron the Orthodox) menaced with death those who held the moderately rational tenet that "the Koran was created,"⁵ as against the orthodox dogma (on all fours with the Brahmanic doctrine concerning the Veda) that it was eternal in the heavens and uncreated. One of the rationalists, Al Mozdar, accused the orthodox party of infidelity, as asserting two eternal things ; and there was current among the Motazilites of his day the hardy doctrine that, "had God left men to their natural liberty, the Arabians could have composed something not only equal but superior to the Koran in eloquence, method, and purity of language."⁶

¹ Dugat, p. 62. The Hâyetians, who had Unitarian Christian leanings, also held by metempsychosis. Sale, p. 163.

² Dugat, p. 71.

³ *Id.*, p. 72 ; Sale, pp. 184-5 ; Tabari's *Chronicle*, Pt. v, c. 97, Zotenberg's trans., 1874, iv, 447-453. Tabari notes (p. 448) that all the Moslem theologians agree in thinking *sendekism* much worse than any of the false religions, since it rejects all and denies God as well as the Prophet.

⁴ Cp. Steiner, pp. 55 sq, 66 sq ; Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philos.*, i, 405.

⁵ Dugat, p. 76. See Sale, pp. 82-83, 162-3, as to the champions of this principle.

⁶ Sale, p. 83.

Haroun's crimes, however, consisted little in acts of persecution. The Persian Barmekides (the family of his first Vizier, surnamed Barmek) were regarded as protectors of Motazilites;¹ and one of the sons, Jaafer, was even suspected of atheism, all three indeed being charged with it.² Their destruction, on other grounds, does not seem to have altered the conditions for the thinkers; but Haroun's incompetent son Emin was a devotee and persecutor. His abler brother and conqueror MAMOUN, on the other hand, directly favoured the Motazilites, partly on political grounds, to strengthen himself with the Persian party, but also on the ground of conviction.³ He even imprisoned some of the orthodox theologians who maintained that the Koran was not a created thing, though, like certain persecutors of other faiths, he had expressly declared himself in favour of persuasion as against coercion.⁴ In one case he inflicted a cruel torture. Compared with others, certainly, he did not carry his coercion far, though, on being once publicly addressed as "Ameer of the Unbelievers," he caused the fanatic who said it to be put to death.⁵ In private he was wont to conduct meetings for discussion, attended by believers and unbelievers of every shade, at which the only restriction was that the appeal must be to reason, and never to the Koran.⁶ Concerning his personal bias, it is related that he had received from Kabul a book in old Persian, *The Eternal Reason*, which taught that reason is the only basis for religion, and that revelation cannot serve as a standing ground.⁷ The story is interesting, but enigmatic, the origin of the book being untraceable. The fact remains, however, that Mamoun was of all the Khalifs the greatest promoter of science⁸ and culture; the chief encourager of the study

¹ Dugat, p. 79; Osborn, *Khalifs of Bagdad*, p. 195.

² Palmer, *Haroun Alraschid*, p. 82. They were really theists.

³ Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, ii, 215, 261, 280; A. Müller, *Der Islam*, pp. 514-5.

⁴ Dugat, pp. 85-96.

⁵ *Id.*, p. 83.

⁶ See extract by Major Osborn, *Khalifs*, p. 250.

⁷ Osborn, *Khalifs*, p. 249.

⁸ He it was who first caused to be measured a degree of the earth's

and translation of Greek literature ;¹ and, despite his coercion of the theologians on the dogma of the eternity of the Koran, tolerant enough to put a Christian at the head of a college at Damascus, declaring that he chose him not for his religion but for his science. In the same spirit he permitted the free circulation of the apologetic treatise of the Armenian Christian Al Kindy, in which Islam and the Koran are freely criticised. As a ruler, too, he ranks among the best of his race for clemency, justice, and decency of life, although orthodox imputations were cast on his subordinates. His successors Motasim and Wathek were of the same cast of opinion, the latter being, however, fanatical on behalf of his rationalistic view of the Koran as a created thing.²

A violent orthodox reaction set in under the worthless and Turk-ruled Khalif Motawakkel³ (847-861), by whose time the Khalifate was in a state of political decadence, partly from the economic exhaustion following on its tyrannous and extortionate rule; partly from the divisive tendencies of its heterogeneous sections; partly from the corrupting tendency of all despotic power.⁴ Despite the official restoration of orthodoxy, the private cultivation of science and philosophy proceeded for a time; the study and translation of Greek books continued;⁵ and rationalism of a kind seems to have subsisted more or less secretly to the end. In the tenth century it is said to have reached even the unlearned. Faith in Mohammed's mission and law began again to shake; and the learned disregarded its prescriptions. Mystics professed to find the way to God without the Koran. Many decided that

surface. The attempt was duly denounced as atheistic by a leading theologian, Takyuddin. Montucla, *Hist. des Mathématiques*, éd. Lalande, i, 355 sq.; Draper, *Conflict of Religion and Science*, p. 109.

¹ A. Müller, *Der Islam*, i. 509 sq.; Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, ii, 280 ff.

² Dugat, pp. 105-111; Sale, p. 82. Apart from this one issue, general tolerance seems to have prevailed. Osborn, *Khalifs*, p. 265.

³ Dugat, p. 112; Steiner, p. 79. According to Abulfaragius, Motawakkel had the merit of leaving men free to believe what they would as to the creation of the Koran. Sale, p. 82.

⁴ A good analysis is given by Dugat, pp. 337-348.

⁵ The whole of Aristotle, except, apparently, the *Politics*, had been translated in the time of the philosopher Avicenna (fl. 1000).

religion was useful for regulating the people, but was not for the wise. On the other side, however, the orthodox condemned all science as leading to unbelief,¹ and developed an elaborate and quasi-systematic theology. It was while the scientific encyclopedists of Bassorah were amassing the knowledge which, through the Moors, renewed thought in the West, that Al Ashari built up the *Kalâm* or scholastic theology which thenceforth reigned in the Mohammedan East;² and the philosopher Al Gazel (or El Gazzali), on his part, employed the ancient and modern device of turning a profession of philosophical scepticism to the account of orthodoxy.³

In the struggle between science and religion, in a politically decadent State, the latter inevitably secured the administrative power.⁴ Under the Khalifs Motamid (d. 892) and Motadhed (d. 902), all science and philosophy were proscribed, and booksellers were put upon their oath not to sell any but orthodox books.⁵ Thus, though philosophy and science had secretly survived, when the political end came the popular faith was in much the same state as it had been under Haroun Alraschid. Under Islam as under all the faiths of the world, in the east as in the west, the mass of the people remained ignorant as well as poor; and the learning and skill of the scholars served only to pass on the saved treasure of Greek thought and science to the new civilisation of Europe. The fact that the age of military and political decadence was that of the widest diffusion of rationalism is naturally fastened on as giving the explanation of the decline; but the inference is pure fallacy. The Bagdad Khalifate declined as the Christianised

¹ Steiner, *Die Mu'tasiliten*, pp. 10-11, following Gazzali (Al Gazel); Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, iii, 72.

² Guyard, pp. 41-42; Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 104-5. The cultivators of *Kalâm* were called *Motecallemin*.

³ Ueberweg, i, 405, 414; Steiner, p. 11; Whewell, *Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd ed., i, 193-4.

⁴ Hence, among other things, a check on the practice of anatomy, religious feeling being opposed to it under Islam as under Christianity. Dugat, pp. 62-3.

⁵ Dugat, pp. 123-8.

Roman Empire declined, from political and external causes ; and the Turks who overthrew it proceeded to overthrow Christian Byzantium, where rationalism never reared its head.

The conventional view is thus set forth in a popular work (*The Saracens*, by Arthur Gilman, 1887, p. 385): "Unconsciously Mamun began a process by which that implicit faith which had been at once the foundation and the inspiration of Islam, which had nerved its warriors in their terrible warfare, and had brought the nation out of its former obscurity to the foremost position among the peoples of the world, was to be taken from them." We have seen that this view is entirely erroneous as regards the rise of the Saracen power ; and it is no less so as regards the decline. At the outset there had been no "implicit faith" among the conquerors. The Eastern Saracens, further, had been decisively defeated by the Byzantines in the very first flush of their fanaticism and success ; and the Western had been routed by Charles Martel long before they had any philosophy. There was no overthrow of faith among the warriors of the Khalifate. The enlistment of Turkish mercenaries by Mamun and Motasim, by way of being independent of the Persian and Arab factions in the army and the State, introduced an element which, at first purely barbaric, became as orthodox as the men of Haroun's day had been. Yet the decadence, instead of being checked, was furthered.

Nor were the strifes set up by the rationalistic view of the Koran nearly so destructive as the mere faction-fights and sectarian insurrections which began with Motawakkel. The falling-away of cities and provinces under the feeble Moktader (908-932) had nothing whatever to do with opinions, but was strictly analogous to the dissolution of the kingdom of Charlemagne under his successors, through the rise of new provincial energies ; and the tyranny of the Turkish mercenaries was on all fours with that of the Pretorians of the Roman Empire, and with that of the Janissaries in later Turkey. The writer under notice has actually recorded (p. 408) that the warlike sect of Ismailitic Karmathians, who did more than any other enemy to dismember the Khalifate, were unbelievers in the Koran, deniers of revelation, and disregards of prayer. The later Khalifs, puppets in the hands of the Turks, were one and all devout believers.

On the other hand, fresh Moslem and non-Moslem dynasties arose alternately as the conditions and opportunities determined. Jenghiz Khan, who overran Asia, was no Moslem ; neither was Tamerlane ; but new Moslem conquerors did overrun India, as

pagan Alexander had done in his day. Theological ideas counted for as little in one case as in the other. Sultan Mahmoud of Ghazni (997-1030), who reared a new empire on the basis of the province of Khorassan and the kingdom of Bokhara, and who twelve times successfully invaded India, happened to be of Turkish stock; but he is also recorded to have been in his youth a doubter of a future state, as well as of his personal legitimacy. His later parade of piety (as to which see Baron De Slane's tr. of Ibn Khallikan's *Biog. Dict.*, iii, 334) is thus a trifle suspect (*British India*, in Edin. Cab. Lib., 3rd ed. i, 189, following Ferishta); and his avarice seems to have animated him to the full as much as his faith, which was certainly not more devout than that of the Brahmans of Somnauth, whose hold he captured. During his reign, besides, unbelief was rife in his despite (Weil, *Geschichte der Chalifen*, iii, 72). The conventional theorem as to the political importance of faith, in short, will not bear investigation. Even Freeman here sets it aside (*Hist. and Conq. of the Saracens*, p. 124).

§ 4.

It is in the later and nominally decadent ages of the Bagdad Khalifate, when science and culture and even industry relatively prospered by reason of the personal impotence of the Khalifs, that we meet with the most pronounced and the most perspicacious of the Free-thinkers of Islam. In the years 970-1057 flourished at Bagdad the blind poet Aboul-Ala EL MARRI, who in his verse derided all religions as alike absurd, and yet was for some reason never persecuted. One of his sayings was that "The world holds two classes of men; intelligent men without religion, and religious men without intelligence."¹ He may have escaped on the strength of a character for general eccentricity, for he was an ardent vegetarian and an opponent of all parentage, declaring that to bring a child into the world was to add to the sum of suffering.²

A century later still, and in another region, we come upon the (now) most famous of all eastern freethinkers, OMAR KHAYYÁM. He belonged to Naishápúr in Khorassan, a province which had long been known

¹ Dugat, p. 167; Weil, iii, 72.

² Dugat, pp. 164-168.

for its rationalism,¹ and which had been part of the nucleus of the great Asiatic kingdom created by Sultan Mahmoud of Ghazni at the beginning of the eleventh century, soon after the rise of the Fatimite dynasty in Egypt. Under that Sultan flourished Ferdusi (Firdausi), one of the chief glories of Persian verse. After Mahmoud's death, his realm and parts of the Khalifate in turn were overrun by the Seljuk Turks under Togrul Beg; under whose grandson Malik it was that Omar Khayyám, astronomer and poet, studied and sang in Khorassan. The Turk-descended Shah favoured science as strongly as any of the Abassides; and when he decided to reform the calendar, Omar was one of the eight experts he employed to do it. Thus was set up for the East the Jaláli calendar, which, as Gibbon has noted,² "surpasses the Julian and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style." Omar was, in fact, one of the ablest mathematicians of his age.³

Beyond question, the poet-astronomer was undevout; and his astronomy doubtless helped to make him so. His first English translators, reflecting the tone of the first half of the century, have thought fit to moralise censoriously over his attitude to life; and the first, Professor Cowell, has austere decided that Omar's gaiety is "but a *risus sardonius* of despair."⁴ Even the subtler Fitzgerald, who has so admirably rendered some of the audacities which Cowell thought "better left in the original Persian," has the air of apologising for them when he partly concurs in the same estimate. But despair is not the name for the humorous melancholy which Omar weaves around his thoughts on the riddle of the universe. In epigrams which have never been surpassed for their echoing depth, he disposes of the theistic solution; whereafter, instead of offering another shibboleth, he sings of wine and roses, of the joys of life

¹ Weil, ii, 215.

² *Decline and Fall*, c. 57. Bohn ed. vi, 382, and *note*.

³ See the preface to Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubáiyát*.

⁴ Cited in introd. to Dole's variorum ed. of the *Rubáiyát*, 1896, i, p. xix.

and of their speedy passage. It was his way of turning into music the undertone of all mortality ; and that it is now preferable, for any refined intelligence, to the affectation of zest for a "hereafter" on which no one wants to enter, would seem to be proved by the remarkable vogue he has secured in modern England, chiefly through the incomparable version of Fitzgerald. Much of the attraction, doubtless, is due to the canorous cadence and felicitous phrasing of those singularly fortunate stanzas ; but the thoughts of Omar remain their kernels : and whereas the counsel, "Gather ye roses while ye may," is common enough, it must be the weightier bearing of his deeper and more daring ideas that gives the quatrains their main hold to-day. Never popular in the Moslem world, he has had in ours an unparalleled welcome ; and it must be because from his scientific vantage ground in the East, in the period of the Norman Conquest, he had attained the vision and chimed with the mood of a later and larger age.

That Omar in his day and place was not alone in his mood, lies on the face of his verse. The allusions to the tavern, a thing suspect and illicit for Islam, show that he was in a society more Persian than Arab ; and doubtless Persian thought, always leaning to heresy, and charged with germs of scientific speculation from immemorial antiquity, prepared his rationalism ; though his monism excludes alike dualism and theism. "One for two I never did misread" is his summing up of his philosophy.¹ But the same formula would serve for the philosophy of the sect of Sufis, who in all ages seem to have included unbelievers as well as devoutly mystical pantheists. Founded, it is said, by a woman, Rabia, in the first century of the Hej'ra,² the sect really carries on a pre-Mohammedan mysticism, and may as well derive from Greece³ as from Asia. Its original doctrine of divine

¹ Fitzgerald's pref., 4th ed. p. xiii. Cp. quatrains cited in art. SUFFISM, in *Relig. Systems of the World*, 2nd ed. pp. 325-6.

² Guyard, as cited, p. 42. But cp. Ueberweg, i, 411.

³ It is *not* impossible, Max Müller notwithstanding, that the name may have come originally from the Greek *sophoi*, "the wise," though it

love, as a reaction against Moslem austerity, gave it a fixed hold in Persia, and became the starting point of innumerable heterodox doctrines.¹ Under the Khalif Moktadir, a Persian Sufi is recorded to have been tortured and executed for teaching that every man is God.² In later ages, Sufism became loosely associated with every species of independent thinking ; and there is reason to suspect that the later poets SADI (fl. thirteenth century) and HAFIZ³ (fl. fourteenth century), as well as hundreds of lesser status, held under the name of Sufism views of life not far removed from those of Omar Khayyám ; who, however, had bantered the Sufis so unmercifully that they are said to have dreaded and hated him.⁴ In any case, Sufism has included such divergent types as Al Gazel⁵ (Gazzali), the sceptical defender of the faith ; devout pantheistic poets such as Jâmi ;⁶ and singers of love and wine such as Hafiz, whose extremely concrete imagery is certainly not as often allegorical as serious Sufis assert, though no doubt it is sometimes so.⁷ It even became nominally associated with the destructive Ismaïlism of the sect of the Assassins, whose founder, Hassan, had been the school-fellow of Omar Khayyám.⁸

Of Sufism as a whole it may be said that whether as inculcating quietism, or as widening the narrow theism of Islam into pantheism, or as sheltering an unaggressive rationalism, it has made for freedom and humanity in the

is usually connected with *sufi*=the woollen robe worn by the Sufite. There are other etymologies. Cp. Fraser, *Histor. and Descrip. Account of Persia*, 1834, p. 323, note ; and art. SUFISM in *Relig. Systems of the World*, 2nd ed. p. 315 ; and Dugat, p. 326. On the Sufi system in general see also Max Müller, *Psychol. Relig.*, Lect. vi.

¹ Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, p. 293, as to Sufi latitudinarianism.

² Guyard, p. 44 ; *Relig. Systems*, p. 319.

³ Hafiz in his own day was reckoned impious by many. Cp. Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia*, 1827, ii, 100.

⁴ Fitzgerald's pref., p. x.

⁵ Yet he was disposed to put to death those who claimed mystic intercourse with Deity. Sale, pp. 177-8.

⁶ Whose *Salaman and Absal*, translated by Fitzgerald, is so little noticed in comparison with the *Rubáiyát* of Omar.

⁷ E. C. Browne, in *Religious Systems*, as cited, p. 321 ; Dugat, p. 331.

⁸ Fitzgerald's pref., following Mirkhond ; Fraser, *Persia*, p. 329.

Mohammedan world, lessening the evils of ignorance where it could not inspire progress.¹ It long anticipated the semi-rationalism of those Christians who declare heaven and hell to be names for bodily or mental states in this life.² On its more philosophic side, too, it connects with the long movement of speculation which, passing into European life through the Western Saracens, revived Greek philosophic thought in Christendom after the night of the Middle Ages, at the same time that Saracen science passed on the more precious seeds of real knowledge to the new civilisation.

§ 5.

There is the less need to deal at any length in these pages with the professed philosophy of the eastern Arabs, seeing that it was from first to last but little associated with any direct or practical repudiation of dogma and superstition.³ What freethought there was had only an unwritten currency, and is to be traced, as so often happens in later European history, through the protests of orthodox apologists. Thus Al Gazel, in the preface to his work, *The Destruction of the Philosophers*, declares of the subjects of his attack that "the source of all their errors is the trust they have in the names of Socrates, Hippocrates, Plato, and Aristotle; the admiration they profess for their genius and subtlety; and the belief, finally, that those great masters have been led by the profundity of their faculty to reject all religion, and to regard its precepts as the product of artifice and imposture."⁴ This implies an abundant rationalism,⁵ but, as always, the unwritten unbelief lost ground, its

¹ Cp. Dugat, p. 336; Syed Ameer Ali, pp. 311-315; Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, 2e édit., p. 68.

² Sale, p. 176. A belief that hell-fire will not be eternal was held among the Motazilite sect of Jâhedhians. Sale, p. 164. The Thama-mians, again, held that at the resurrection all infidels, idolaters, atheists, Jews, Christians, Magians, and heretics, shall be reduced to dust. *Id. ib.*

³ Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, p. 101. Cp. p. 172.

⁴ Renan's trans. in *Averroès*, p. 166. The wording of the last phrase suggests a misconstruction.

⁵ Cp. p. 172.

non-publication being the proof that orthodoxy prevailed against it. Movements which were originally liberal, such as that of the Motecallemin, ran at length to mere dialectic defence of the faith against the philosophers. Fighting the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of matter, they sought to found a new theistic creationism on the atoms of Democritus, making God the creator of the atoms, and negating the idea of natural law.¹ Eastern Moslem philosophy in general followed some such line of reaction and petrification. The rationalistic AL KINDI (fl. 850) seems to have been led to philosophise by the Motazilite problems; but his successors mostly set them aside, developing an abstract logic and philosophy on Greek bases, or studying science for its own sake, though as a rule professing a devout acceptance of the Koran.² Such was AVICENNA (Ibn Sina : d. 1037), who taught that men should revere the faith in which they were educated, though in comparison with his predecessor Al Farabi, who leant to Platonic mysticism, he is a rationalistic Aristotelian,³ with a strong leaning to pantheism. After Al Gazel (d. 1111), who attacked both of these somewhat in the spirit of Cicero's sceptical Cotta attacking the Stoics and the Epicureans,⁴ uncritical orthodoxy prevailed in the Eastern schools; and it is in Moorish Spain that we are to look for the last efforts of Arab philosophy.

The course of culture-evolution there broadly corresponds with that of the Saracen civilisation in the East. In Spain the Moors came into contact with the Roman imperial polity, and at the same time with the different culture elements of Judaism and Christianity. To both of these faiths they gave complete toleration, thus strengthening their own in a way that no other policy

¹ Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 104-107.

² Steiner, *Die Mu'taziliten*, p. 6.

³ Ueberweg, i, 412; Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 44, 96.

⁴ Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 57, 96-98; Whewell, *Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd ed. i, 193. Renan, following Degenerando (cp. Whewell, as cited), credits Gazzali with anticipating Hume's criticism of the idea of causation; but Gazzali's position is that of dogmatic theism, not of naturalism. See Lewes, *Hist. of Philos.*, 4th ed. ii, 57.

could have availed to do. Whatever was left of Græco-Roman art, handicraft, and science, saving the arts of portraiture, they encouraged; and whatever of agricultural science remained from Carthaginian times they zealously adopted and improved. Like their fellow-Moslems in the East, they further learned all the science that the preserved literature of Greece could give them. The result was that under energetic and enlightened khalifs the Moorish civilisation became the centre of light and knowledge as well as of material prosperity for mediæval Europe. Whatever of science the world possessed was to be found in their schools; and thither in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries flocked students from the Christian States of western and northern Europe. It was in whole or in part from Saracen hands that the modern world received astronomy, chemistry, mathematics, medicine, botany, jurisprudence, and philosophy. They were, in fact, the revivers of civilisation after the age of barbarian Christianity.¹ And while the preservation of Greek science, lost from the hands of Christendom, would have been a notable service enough, the Arabs did much more. Alhazen (d. 1038) is said to have done the most original work in optics before Newton,² and in the same century Arab medicine and chemistry made original advances.³

While the progressive period lasted, there was of course an abundance of practical freethought. But after a marvellously rapid rise, the Moorish civilisation was arrested and paralysed by the internal and the external forces of anti-civilisation—religious fanaticism within and Christian hostility without. Everywhere we have seen culture-progress depending more or less clearly

¹ Cp. Seignobos, *Hist. de la Civ.*, ii, 58; Stanley Lane Poole, *The Moors in Spain*, pref.; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 108-118; U. R. Burke, *History of Spain*, i, ch. 16; Baden Powell, as cited, pp. 94-104; Gebhart, *Origines de la Renaissance en Italie*, 1879, pp. 185-189; and *post*, ch. x.

² Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.*, 1834, p. 97; Whewell, *Hist. of the Induct. Sciences*, 3rd ed. ii, 273-4.

³ Dr. L. Leclerc, *Hist. de la Médecine Arabe*, 1876, i, 462; Dr. E. von. Meyer, *Hist. of Chemistry*, Eng. trans. 2nd ed. p. 28.

on the failure to find solutions for political problems. The most fatal defect of all Arab civilisation—a defect involved in its first departure by way of conquest, and in its fixedly hostile relation to the Christian States, which kept it constantly on a military basis—was the total failure to substitute any measure of constitutional rule for despotism. It was thus politically unprogressive, even while advancing in other respects. But in other respects also it soon reached the limits set by the conditions.

Whereas in Persia the Arabs overran an ancient civilisation, containing many elements of rationalism which acted upon their own creed, the Moors in Spain found a population only slightly civilised, and predisposed by its recent culture, as well as by its natural conditions,¹ to fanatical piety. Thus when, under their tolerant rule, Jews and Christians in large numbers embraced Islam, the new converts became the most fanatical of all.² All rationalism existed in their despite, and, abounding as they did, they tended to gain power whenever the Khalif was weak, and to rebel furiously when he was hostile. When, accordingly, the growing pressure of the feudal Christian power in Northern Spain at length became a menacing danger to the Moorish States, weakened by endless intestine strife, the one resource was to call in a new force of Moslem fanaticism in the shape of the Almoravide³ Berbers, who, to the utmost of their power, put down everything scientific and rationalistic, and established a rigid Koranolatry. After a time they in turn, growing degenerate while remaining orthodox, were overrun by a new influx of conquering fanatics from Africa, the Almohades, who, failing to add political science to their faith, went down in the thirteenth century before the Christians in Spain, in a great battle in which their

¹ Cp. Buckle, *Introd. to Hist. of Civ. in England*, 1-vol. ed. p. 70.

² Lane-Poole, *The Moors in Spain*, p. 73.

³ Properly Morabethin = men of God or of religion; otherwise known as "Marabouts."

prince sat in their sight with the Koran in his hand.¹ Here there could be no pretence that "unbelief" wrought the downfall. The Jonah of freethought, so to speak, had been thrown overboard; and the ship went down with the flag of faith flying at every masthead.²

It was in the last centuries of Moorish rule that there flourished the philosophers whose names connect it with the history of European thought, retaining thus a somewhat factitious distinction as compared with the men of science, many of them nameless, who developed and transmitted the sciences. The pantheistic AVEMPACE (Ibn Badja: d. 1138), who defended the reason against the theistic skepticism of Al Gazel,³ was physician, astronomer, and mathematician, as well as metaphysician; as was ABUBACER (Abu Bekr, also known as Ibn Tophail: d. 1185), who regarded religious systems as "only a necessary means of discipline for the multitude,"⁴ and as being merely symbols of the higher truth reached by the philosopher. Both men, however, tended rather to mysticism than to exact thought; and Abubacer's treatise, *The Self-taught Philosopher*, which has been translated into Latin (by Pococke in 1671), English, Dutch, and German, has had the singular fortune of being adopted by the Quakers as a work of edification.⁵

Very different was the part played by AVERROËS (Ibn Roshd), the most famous of all Moslem thinkers, because the most far-reaching in his influence on European thought. For the Middle Ages he was pre-eminently the expounder of Aristotle, and it is as setting forth, in that capacity, the pantheistic doctrine which affirms the eternity of the material universe and makes the individual soul emanate from and return to the soul of all, that he becomes important alike in Moslem and

¹ Sedillot, p. 298.

² Cp. Dozy, *Hist. des Musulmans d'Espagne*, iii, 248-286; Ueberweg, i, 415.

³ Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 98-99.

⁴ Ueberweg, i, 415; Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 32, 99.

⁵ Renan, *Averroës*, p. 99.

Christian thought. Diverging from the asceticism and mysticism of Avempace and Abubacer, and strenuously opposing the anti-rationalism of Al Gazel, against whose chief treatise he penned his own *Destruction of the Destruction of the Philosophers*, Averroës is the least mystical and the most rational of the Arab thinkers.¹ At nearly all vital points he oppugns the religious view of things, denying bodily resurrection, which he treats (here following all his predecessors in heretical Arab philosophy) as a vulgar fable;² and making some approach to a scientific treatment of the problem of "Freewill" as against, on the one hand, the ethic-destroying doctrine of the Motecallemîn, who made God's will the sole standard of right, and affirmed predestination (Jabarism); and against, on the other hand, the anti-determinism of the Kadarites.³ Even in his politics, he was original; and in his Paraphrase of Plato's *Republic* he has said a notable word for women, pointing out how small an opening is offered for their faculties in Moslem society.⁴ Of all tyrannies, he boldly declared, the worst is that of priests.

In time, however, a consciousness of the vital hostility of his doctrine to current creeds, and of the danger he consequently ran, made him, like so many of his later disciples, anxious to preserve priestly favour. As regards religion he was more complaisant than Abubacer, pronouncing Mohammedanism the most perfect of all popular systems,⁵ and preaching a patriotic conformity on that score to philosophic students.

From him derives the formula of a two-fold truth—one truth for science or philosophy, and another for religion—which played so large a part in the academic life of Christendom for centuries.⁶ In two of his treatises, *On the harmony of religion with philosophy* and *On the demonstration of religious dogmas*, he even takes

¹ Renan, *Averroës*, p. 145.

² *Id.* pp. 156–158.

³ *Id.* pp. 159–160.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 160–162.

⁵ Ueberweg, i, 416; Steiner, p. 6; Renan, *Averroës*, p. 162 sq.

⁶ Ueberweg, i, 460; Renan, pp. 258, 275.

up a conservative attitude, proclaiming that the wise man never utters a word against the established creed, and going so far as to say that the freethinker who attacks it, inasmuch as he undermines popular virtue, deserves death.¹ Even in rebutting, as entirely absurd, the doctrine of the creation of the world, and ascribing its currency to the stupefying power of habit, he takes occasion to remark piously that those whose religion has no better basis than faith are frequently seen, on taking up scientific studies, to become utter *zendeks*.² But he lived in an age of declining culture and reviving fanaticism; and all his conformities could not save him from proscription, at the hands of a Khalif who had long favoured him, for the offence of cultivating Greek antiquity to the prejudice of Islam. All study of Greek philosophy was proscribed at the same time, and all books found on the subject were destroyed.³ Disgraced and banished from court, Averroës died at Morocco in 1198; other philosophers were similarly persecuted;⁴ and soon afterwards the Moorish rule in Spain came to an end in the odour of sanctity.⁵

So complete was now the defeat of the intellectual life in Western Islam that the ablest writer produced by the Arab race in the period of the Renaissance, Ibn Khaldun of Tunis (1332-1406), writes as a bigoted believer in revelation, though his writings on the science of history were the most philosophic since the classic period, being out of all comparison superior to those of the Christian chroniclers of his age.⁶ So rationalistic, indeed, is his method, relatively to his time, that it is permissible to suspect him of seeking to propitiate the

¹ Renan, *Averroës*, p. 169, and references.

² *Id.* pp. 165-6.

³ *Id.* p. 5. Cp. the *Avertissement*, p. iii.

⁴ Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 31-36. Renan surmises that the popular hostility to the philosophers, which was very marked, was largely due to the element of the conquered Christians, who were noted for their neglect of astronomy and natural science.

⁵ Cp. Ueberweg, i, 415-417.

⁶ Cp. Flint, *History of the Philosophy of History*, ed. 1893, vol. i, p. 169.

bigots.¹ But neither they nor his race in general could learn the sociological lessons he had it in him to teach. Their development was arrested for that period.

§ 6.

Of later freethought under Islam there is little to record ; but the phenomenon has never disappeared. Motazilism is still heard of in Arabia itself.² In the Ottoman Empire, indeed, it is little in evidence ; but in Persia the ancient leaning to rationalism is still common. The old-world pantheism which we have seen conserved in Omar Khayyám gave rise in later centuries to similar developments among the Parsees both in Persia and in India ; and from the sixteenth century onwards there are clear traces among them of a number of rationalising heresies, varying from pantheism and simple deism to atheism and materialism.³ In Persia to-day there are many thinkers of these casts of thought.⁴ About 1830, a British traveller estimated that, assuming there were between 200,000 and 300,000 Sufis in the country, those figures probably fell greatly short of the number "secretly inclined to infidelity."⁵ Whatever be the value of the figures, the statement is substantially confirmed by later observers ;⁶ missionaries reporting independently that in Persia "most of the higher class, of the nobility, and of the learned professions.....are at heart infidels or sceptics."⁷ Persian freethought is of course, in large part, the freethought of ignorance, and seems to co-exist with

¹ Cp. Flint, p. 159, as to their hostility to him.

² Dugat, p. 59. The Ameer Ali Syed, *Moulvi*, M.A., LL.B., whose *Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Mohammed* appeared in 1873, writes as a Motazilite of a moderate type.

³ A. Franck, *Études Orientales*, 1861, pp. 241-8, citing the *Dabistan*.

⁴ Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, 2e édit. ch. v.

⁵ Fraser, *Persia*, p. 330. This writer (p. 329) describes Sufism as "the superstition of the freethinker," and as "often assumed as a cloak to cover entire infidelity."

⁶ E.g., Dr. Wills, *The Land of the Lion and the Sun*, ed. 1891, p. 339.

⁷ Smith and Dwight, *Missionary Researches in Armenia*, 1834, p. 340. Cp. Rev. H. Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour through Armenia*, etc., 1840, ii, 153.

astrological superstition ;¹ but there is obviously needed only science, culture, and material development to produce, on such a basis, a renaissance as remarkable as that of modern Japan.

The verdict of Vambéry is noteworthy : " In all Asia, with the exception of China, there is no land and no people wherein there is so little of religious enthusiasm as in Persia ; where freethinkers are so little persecuted, and can express their opinions with so little disturbance ; and where, finally, as a natural consequence, the old religious structure can be so easily shattered by the outbreak of new enthusiasts. Whoever has read Khay-yám's blasphemies against God and the prophet, his jesting verses against the holiest ceremonies and commandments of Islam ; and whoever knows the vogue of this book and other works directed against the current religion, will not wonder that Bâb with the weapon of the Word won so many hearts in so short a time."²

The view that Bâbism affiliates to rationalism is to be understood in the sense that the atmosphere of the latter made possible the growth of the former, its adherents being apparently drawn rather from the former orthodox.³ The young founder of the sect, Mirza-Ali-Mohammed, declared himself " The Bâb," *i.e.* " the Gate " (to the knowledge of God), as against the orthodox Moslem teachers who taught that " since the twelve Imâms, the Gate of Knowledge is closed." Hence the name of the sect. Mirza-Ali, who showed a strong tendency to intolerance, quickly created an aggressive movement, which was for a time put down by the killing of himself and many of his followers.

¹ Fraser, *Persia*, p. 331 ; Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia*, ii, 108 ; Gobineau, as cited, ch. v.

² H. Vambéry, *Der Islam im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, 1875, pp. 32-33. Vambéry further remarks : " The half-fanatical, half-freethinking tone of Persians has often surprised me in my controversies with the most zealous Schiites."

³ As to the rise of this sect see Gobineau, as cited, pp. 141-358 ; E. G. Browne's *The Episode of the Bâb* ; and his lecture on Bâbism in *Religious Systems of the World*. Cp. Renan, *Les Apôtres*, pp. 378-381.

Since his execution the sect has greatly multiplied and its doctrines have much widened. For a time the founder's intolerant teachings were upheld by Ezél, the founder of one of the two divisions into which the party speedily fell; while his rival Béha, who gave himself out as the true Prophet, of whom the Bâb was merely the precursor, developed a notably cosmopolitan and equalitarian doctrine, including a vague belief in immortality, without heaven, hell, or purgatory. Ezél has latterly abandoned his claims, and his followers now number less than two thousand; while the Béhaïtes number nearly three millions out of the seven millions of the Persian population, and some two millions in the adjacent countries. The son of Béha, Abbas Effendi, who bears the title of "The Great Branch," now rules the cult, which promises to be the future religion of Persia.¹ One of the most notable phenomena of the earlier movement was the entrance of a young woman, daughter of a leading ulema, who for the first time in Moslem history threw off the regulation veil and preached the equality of the sexes.² She was one of those first executed. Persecution, however, has long ceased, and as a result of her lead the position of woman in the cult is exceptionally good. Thus the last century has witnessed within the sphere of Islam, so commonly supposed to be impervious to change, one of the most rapid and radical religious changes recorded in history. There is therefore no ground for holding that in other Moslem countries progress is at an end.

Everything depends, broadly speaking, on the possibilities of culture-contact. The changes in Persia are traceable to the element of heretical habit which has persisted from pre-Moslem times; future and more scientific development will depend upon the assimilation of European knowledge. In Egypt, before the period

¹ H. Arakélian, *Mémoire sur Le Bâbisme en Perse*, in the *Actes du Premier Congrès International d'Histoire des Religions*, Paris, 1902, 2 Ptie. Fasc. i.

² Gobineau, pp. 167 sq., 180 sq.; Arakélian, p. 94.

of European intervention, freethinking was at a minimum ; and though toleration was well developed as regarded Christians and Jews, freethinking Moslems dared not avow themselves.¹ Latterly rationalism tends to spread in Egypt as in other Moslem countries : even under Mohammed Ali the ruling Turks had begun to exhibit a "remarkable indifference to religion," and had "begun to undermine the foundations of El-Islam"; and so shrewd and dispassionate an observer as Lane expected that the common people would "soon assist in the work," and that "the overthrow of the whole fabric may reasonably be expected to ensue at a period not very remote."² To evolve such a change there will be required a diffusion of culture which is not at all likely to be rapid under any Government ; but in any case the ground that is being lost by Islam in Egypt is not being retaken by Christianity.

In the other British dominions, Mohammedans, though less ready than educated Hindus to accept new ideas, cannot escape the rationalising influence of European culture. Nor was it left to the British to introduce the rationalistic spirit in Moslem India. At the end of the sixteenth century, the eclectic Emperor Akbar,³ himself a devout worshipper of the Sun,⁴ is found tolerantly comparing all religions,⁵ depreciating Islam,⁶ and arriving at such general views on the equivalence of all creeds, and on the improbability of eternal punishment,⁷ as pass for liberal among Christians in our own day. If such views could be generated

¹ Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, 5th ed. 1871, i, 349, 356. "There are, I believe," says Lane (writing originally in 1836), "very few professed Muslims who are really unbelievers ; and these dare not openly avow their unbelief through fear of losing their heads for their apostacy. I have heard of two or three such who have been rendered so by long and intimate intercourse with Europeans ; and have met with one materialist, who has often had long discussions with me."

² *Id.* ii, 309. (Suppl. III, "Of Late Innovations in Egypt.")

³ See the documents reproduced by Max Müller, *Introd. to the Science of Religion*, ed. 1882, App. 1.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 214, 216.

⁶ *Id.* pp. 224, 226.

⁵ *Id.* pp. 210, 217, 224, 225.

⁷ *Id.* pp. 226, 229.

by a comparison of the creeds of pre-British India, they must needs be encouraged now. The Mohammedan mass is of course still deeply fanatical, and habitually superstitious ; but not any more immovably so than the early Saracens. In the eighteenth century arose the fanatical Wahabi sect, which aims at a puritanic restoration of primeval Islam, freed from the accretions of later belief, such as saint-worship ; but the movement, though variously estimated, has had small success, and seems destined to extinction.¹ Of the traditional seventy-three sects in Islam, only four to-day count as orthodox.²

It may be worth while, in conclusion, to note that the comparative prosperity or progressiveness of Islam as a proselytising and civilising force in Africa—a phenomenon regarded even by some Christians with satisfaction, and by some with alarm³—is not strictly or purely a religious phenomenon. Moslem civilisation suits with negro life in Africa in virtue not of the teaching of the Koran, but of the comparative nearness of the Arab to the barbaric life. He interbreeds with the natives, fraternises with them (when not engaged in kidnapping them), and so stimulates their civilisation ; where the European colonist, looking down on them as an inferior species, isolates, depresses, and degrades them. It is thus conceivable that there is a future for Islam at the level of a low culture-stage ; but the Arab and Turkish races out of Africa are rather the more likely to concur in the rationalistic movement of the higher civilisation.

Even in Africa, however, a systematic observer notes, and predicts the extension of, “a strong tendency on the part of the Mohammedans towards an easy-going rationalism, such as is fast making way in Algeria, where the townspeople and the cultivators in the more

¹ Guyard, p. 45 ; Steiner, p. 5, *note* ; Lane, *The Modern Egyptians*, ed. 1871, i, 137-8. Cp. Spencer, *Study of Sociology*, c. xii, p. 292 ; Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, 2nd ed. pp. 315-319.

² Derenbourg, p. 72 ; Steiner, p. 1 ; Lane, i, 79.

³ Cp. Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, Lectures I and IV ; Canon Isaac Taylor, address to Church Congress at Wolverhampton, 1887, and letters to *Times*, Oct. and Nov., 1887.

settled districts, constantly coming in contact with Europeans, are becoming indifferent to the more inconvenient among their Mohammedan observances, and are content to live with little more religion than an observance of the laws, and a desire to get on well with their neighbours."¹ Thus at every culture-level we see the persistence of that force of intellectual variation which is the subject of our inquiry.

¹ Sir Harry H. Johnston, *History of the Colonisation of Africa by Alien Races*, 1899, p. 283.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTENDOM IN THE MIDDLE AGES

It would be an error, in view of the biological generalisation proceeded on and the facts noted in this inquiry, to suppose that even in the Dark Ages, so called,¹ the spirit of critical reason was wholly absent from the life of Christendom. It had simply grown very rare, and was the more discountenanced where it strove to speak. But the most systematic suppression of heresies could not secure that no private heresy should remain. As Voltaire has remarked, there was "nearly always a small flock separated from the great."² Apart, too, from such quasi-rationalism as was involved in semi-Pelagianism,³ critical heresy chronically arose even in the Byzantine provinces, which by the curtailment of the Empire had been left the most homogeneous and therefore the most manageable of the Christian States. It is necessary to note those survivals of partial freethinking, when we would trace the rise of modern thought.

§ 1.

It was probably from some indirect influence of the new anti-idolatrous religion of Islam that in the eighth century the soldier-emperor, Leo the Isaurian, known as

¹ This label has been applied by scholars to the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. One writer, who supposes it to cover the period from 500 to 1400, and protests, is attacking only a misconception. (M. A. Lane, *The Level of Social Motion*, New York, 1902, p. 232.) The Renaissance is commonly reckoned to begin in the eleventh century. But the whole period from the fall of the Roman Empire to the fall of Constantinople, or to the Reformation, is broadly included in the "Middle Ages."

² *Essai sur les Mœurs*, ch. xlv.

³ According to which God predestinated good, but merely foreknew evil.

the Iconoclast, derived his aversion to the image-worship¹ which had long been as general in the Christian world as ever under polytheism. So gross had the superstition become that particular images were frequently selected as god-parents ; of others the paint was partly scratched off to be mixed with the sacramental wine ; and the bread was solemnly put in contact with them.² Leo began (726) by an edict simply causing the images to be placed so high that they could not be kissed, but on being met with resistance and rebellion he ordered their total removal (730). One view is that he saw image-worship to be the main hindrance to the spread of the faith among Jews and Moslems, and took his measures accordingly.³ Save on this one point he was an orthodox Christian and Trinitarian, and his long effort to put down images and pictures was in itself rather fanatical⁴ than rationalistic, though a measure of freethinking was developed among the religious party he created.⁵ Of this spirit, as well as of the aversion to image-worship,⁶ something must have survived the official restoration of idolatry ; but the traces are few. The most zealous iconoclasts seem never to have risen above the flat inconsistency of treating the cross and the written gospels with exactly the same adoration that their opponents paid to images ;⁷ and their appeal to the scriptures—which was their first and last argument—was accordingly met by the retort that they themselves accepted the authority of tradition, as did the image-worshippers. The remarkable hostility of the army to the latter is to be explained, apparently, by the local

¹ For Leo's contacts with the Saracens see Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. Tozer, ii, 14-20, 24, 31-2, 34-5, 37, etc., and compare p. 218. See also Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, 1833, p. 78, note 2 ; and Waddington, *History of the Church*, 1833, p. 187, note.

² Kurtz, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Eng. trans. i, 252. ³ *Id.* p. 253.

⁴ As to his hostility to letters, see Gibbon, ch. 53—Bohn ed. vi, 228. Of course the other side were not any more liberal. Cp. Finlay ii, 222.

⁵ Gieseler, ii, 202. Per. III, Div. I, Pt. i, § 1. In the next century this was said to have gone in some churches to the point of rejection of Christ. *Id.* p. 207, note 28.

⁶ *Id.* pp. 205, 207 ; Finlay, ii, 195.

⁷ Neander, *Hist. of Chr. Church*, Bohn trans. v, 289 ; vi, 266.

bias of the eastern regions from which the soldiers were mainly recruited.

In the ninth century, when Saracen rivalry had stung the Byzantines into some partial revival of culture and science,¹ the all-learned Patriarch PHOTIUS, who reluctantly accepted ecclesiastical office, earned a dangerous repute for freethinking by declaring from the pulpit that earthquakes were produced by earthly causes and not by divine wrath.² But though one emperor of the period, Michael the Drunkard (or "the Stammerer"), was something of a freethinker, and could even with impunity burlesque the religious processions of the clergy,³ the orthodox populace joining in the laugh, there was no such culture at Constantinople as could develop a sober rationalism, or sustain it against the clergy if it showed its head. Michael himself is said to have maintained that Judas was saved, and to have doubted the existence of Satan because he is not named in the Pentateuch⁴—a species of freethinking not far removed from that of the iconoclasts, whose grounds were merely Biblical. While the struggle lasted, it was marked by all the ferocity that belonged from the outset to Christian strifes; and in the end, as usual, the more irrational bias triumphed.

§ 2.

It was in a sect whose doctrine at one point coincided with iconoclasm that there were preserved such rude seeds of oriental rationalism as could survive the rule of the Byzantine emperors, and carry the stimulus of heresy to the west. The rise of the Paulicians in

¹ On their connection at this time with the culture-movement of the Khalifate of Mamoun, see Finlay, ii, 224-5; Gibbon, ch. 53—Bohn ed. vi, 228-9.

² Finlay, ii, 181, *note*. Cp. Mosheim, 9 Cent., Pt. II, c. iii, § 7; and Gibbon, ch. 33—ed. cited, vi, 229. Finlay declares (p. 222) that no Greek of the intellectual calibre of Photius, John the Grammarian, and Leo the Mathematician, has since appeared.

³ Finlay, ii, 174-5, 180.

⁴ Neander, vi, 280.

Armenia dates from the seventh century, and was nominally by way of setting up a creed on the lines of Paul as against the paganised system of the church. Rising as they did on the borders of Persia, they were probably affected from the first by Mazdean influences, as the dualistic principle was always affirmed by their virtual founder, Constantine, afterwards known as Silvanus.¹ Their original tenets seem to have been anti-Manichean, anti-Gnostic (though partly Marcionite), opposed to the worship of images and relics, to sacraments, to the adoration of the Virgin, of saints, and of angels, and to the acceptance of the Old Testament; and in an age in which the reading of the Sacred Books had already come to be regarded as a privilege of monks and priests, they insisted on reading the New Testament for themselves.² In the teaching of Sylvanus, however, there were distinct Manichean and Gnostic characteristics—notably, hostility to Judaism; the denial that Christ had a real human body, capable of suffering; and the doctrine that baptism and the communion were properly spiritual and not physical rites.³ In the ninth century, when they had become a powerful and militant sect, often at war with the empire, they were marked by their refusal to make any difference between priests and laymen. Anti-ecclesiasticism was thus a main feature of the whole movement; and the Byzantine Government, recognising in its doctrine a particularly dangerous

¹ Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, 1853, p. 85. It is noteworthy that the "heathen" Magyars held the Mazdean dualistic principle, and that their evil power was named Armanyos (=Ahrimanes). Mailáth, *Geschichte der Magyaren*, 1828, i, 25-26.

² Gibbon, ch. 54; Mosheim, 9 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v; Gieseler, Per. III, Div. I, Pt. i, § 3; G. S. Faber, *The Ancient Vallenses and Waldenses*, 1838, pp. 32-60. Some fresh light is thrown on the Paulician doctrines by the discovery of the old Armenian book, *The Key of Truth*, edited and translated by F. C. Conybeare, Oxford, 1898. It belonged to the Armenian sect of Thonraki, or Thonrakians, or Thondrakians—people of the village of Thondrac (Neander, vi, 347)—founded by one Sembat, originally a Paulician, in the ninth century (Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, p. 201; Neander, last cit.). For a criticism of Mr. Conybeare's theories see the *Church Quarterly Review*, Jan., 1899, Art. V.

³ Gieseler, Per. III, §§ 45, 46, vol. ii, pp. 489, 492; Hardwick, p. 86. The sect of Euchites, also anti-priestly, seem to have joined them. Faber denies any Manichæan element.

heresy, had at once bloodily attacked it, causing Sylvanus to be stoned to death.¹ Still it grew, even to the length of exhibiting the usual phenomena of schism within itself. One section obtained the protection of the first iconoclastic emperor, who agreed with them on the subject of images; and a later leader, Sergius or Tychicus, won similar favour from Nicephorus I; but Leo the Armenian, fearing the stigma of their other heresies, and having already trouble enough from his iconoclasm, set up against them, as against the image-worshippers, a cruel persecution.² They were thus driven over to the Saracens, whose advance-guard they became as against the Christian State; but the iconoclast Constantine Copronymus sympathetically³ transplanted many of them to Constantinople and Thrace, thus introducing their doctrine into Europe. The Empress Theodora (841-855), who restored image-worship,⁴ sought to exterminate those left in Armenia, slaying, it is said, a hundred thousand.⁵ Many of the remnant were thus forced into the arms of the Saracens; and the sect did the empire desperate mischief during many generations.⁶

Meantime those planted in Thrace, in concert with the main body, carried propaganda into Bulgaria, and these again were further reinforced by refugees from Armenia in the ninth century, and in the tenth by a fresh colony transplanted from Armenia by the emperor John Zimisces, who valued them as a bulwark against

¹ Gibbon, as cited, vi, 241.

² Gibbon, vi, 242; Hardwick, pp. 88-90.

³ Gibbon, vi, 245, and *note*; Finlay, ii, 60.

⁴ Despite the express decision, the use of statues proper (*ἀγάλματα*) gradually disappeared from the Greek church, the disuse finally creating a strong antipathy, while pictures and *ikons* remained in reverence (Tozer's note to Finlay, ii, 165; cp. Waddington, *History of the Church*, 1833, p. 190, *note*). It is probable that the sheer loss of artistic skill counted for much in the change. Cp. Milman, *Latin Christianity*, B. xiv, c. 9; 4th ed. ix, 308-312. It is noteworthy that, whereas in the struggle over images their use was for two long periods legally abolished, it was in both cases restored by empresses.

⁵ Hardwick, p. 80, *note*; Neander, vi, 340.

⁶ Cp. Kurtz, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Eng. trans. i, 271.

the barbarous Slavs.¹ Fresh persecution under Alexius I at the end of the eleventh century failed to suppress them; and imperial extortion constantly drove to their side numbers of fresh adherents,² while the Bulgarians for similar reasons tended in mass to adopt their creed as against that of Constantinople. So greatly did the cult flourish that at its height it had a regular hierarchy, notably recalling that of the early Manicheans—with a pope, twelve *magistri*, and seventy-two bishops, each of whom had a *filius major* and *filius minor* as his assistants. Withal the democratic element remained strong, the laying on of the hands of communicants on the heads of newcomers being part of the rite of reception into full membership. Thus it came about that from Bulgaria there passed into western Europe,³ partly through the Slavonic sect called Bogomiles or Bogomilians⁴ (= *Theophiloi*, “lovers of God”), who were akin to the Paulicians, partly by more general influences,⁵ a contagion of democratic and anti-ecclesiastical heresy; so that the very name Bulgar became the French *bougre* = heretic—and worse.⁶ It specified the most obvious source of the new anti-Romanist heresies of the Albigenses, if not of the Vaudois (Waldenses).

§ 3.

In the west, meanwhile, where the variety of social elements was favourable to new life, heresy of a rationalistic kind was not wholly lacking. About the middle of the eighth century we find one Feargal or Virgilius, an Irish priest in Bavaria, accused by St. Boniface, his enemy, of affirming, “in defiance of God and his own

¹ Gibbon, vi, 246; Finlay, iii, 64; Mosheim, 10 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v.

² Finlay, iii, 66.

³ Gibbon, as cited; R. Lane Poole, *Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought*, 1884, pp. 91–96; Mosheim, 11 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v.

⁴ Finlay, iii, 67–68; Mosheim, 12 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v, § 2. Hardwick, pp. 302–5; Kurtz, i, 270–3.

⁵ Gieseler, Per. III, Div. II, Pt. iii, § 46.

⁶ Gibbon, vi, 249, *note*; Poole, p. 91, *note*; De Potter, *L'Esprit de L'Église*, 1821, vi, 16, *note*.

soul," the doctrine of the antipodes,¹ which must have reached him through the ancient Greek lore carried to Ireland in the primary period of Christianisation of that province. Of that influence we have already seen a trace in Pelagius and Cœlestius; and we shall see more later in John the Scot. After being deposed by the Pope, Virgilius was reinstated; was made Bishop of Salzburg, and held the post till his death; and was even sainted afterwards; but the doctrine disappeared for centuries from the Christian world.

Other heresies, however, asserted themselves. Though image-worship finally triumphed there as in the east, it had strong opponents, notably Claudius, bishop of Turin (fl. 830) under the emperor Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, and his contemporary Agobard, bishop of Lyons.² It is a significant fact that both men were born in Spain; and either to Saracen or to Jewish influence—the latter being then strong in the Moorish and even in the Christian³ world—may fairly be in part attributed their marked bias against image-worship. Claudius was slightly and Agobard well educated in Latin letters, so that an early impression⁴ would seem to have been at work in both cases. However that may be, they stood out as singularly rationalistic theologians in an age of general ignorance and superstition. Claudius vehemently resisted alike image-worship, saint-worship, and the Papal claims, and is recorded to have termed a council of bishops which condemned him "an assembly of asses."⁵ Agobard, in turn, is quite extraordinary in the thoroughness of his rejection of popular superstition,

¹ Boniface, *Ep.* lxvi, cited by Poole, p. 23; Reid's Mosheim, p. 263, note 3; Neander, *Hist. of the Christian Church*, Bohn trans., v, 86-87; Hardwick, p. 23.

² For excellent accounts of both, see Mr. R. Lane Poole's *Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought*, pp. 28-50. As to Claudius, cp. Monastier, *Hist. of the Vaudois Church*, Eng. trans., 1848, pp. 13-42, and Faber, *The Ancient Vallenses*, B. iii, c. 4.

³ See Mr. Poole's *Illustrations*, pp. 46-48, for an account of the privileges then accorded to Jews.

⁴ This is not incompatible with their having opposed both Saracens (Claudius in actual war) and Jews, as Christian bishops.

⁵ Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 37.

being not only an iconoclast but an enemy to prayer for change in the weather, to belief in incantations and the power of evil spirits, to the ordeal by fire, to the wager of battle,¹ and to the belief in the verbal inspiration of the Sacred Books. In an age of enormous superstition and deep ignorance, he maintained within the Church that Reason was the noble gift of God.² He was a rationalist born out of due time.³

A grain of rationalism, as apart from professional self-interest, may also have entered into the outcry made at this period by the clergy against the rigidly predestinarian doctrine of the monk Gottschalk.⁴ His enemy, Rabanus or Hrabanus (called "the Moor"), seems again to represent some Saracen influence, inasmuch as he reproduced the scientific lore of Isidore of Seville.⁵ But the philosophic semi-rationalism of JOHN SCOTUS (d. 875), later known as Erigena (John the Scot= of Ireland—the original "Scots" being Irish), seems to be traceable to the Greek studies which had been cherished in Christianised Ireland while the rest of western Europe lost them, and represents at once the imperfect beginning of the relatively rationalistic philosophy of Nominalism⁶ and the first western revival of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, howbeit by way of accommodation to the doctrine of the Church.⁷

¹ This when the Church found its account in adopting all such usages. Lea, *Superstition and Force*, pp. 242, 280, etc. It is to be noted, however, that one Council, that of Valence, 855, perhaps under the influence of Agobard's teaching, published a canon prohibiting all duels, and praying the emperor to abolish them. Cited by Waddington, *History of the Church*, 1833, p. 242, note, from Fleury.

² Lib. *De Grandine et tonitruis*, c. 3; and lib. *De imaginibus*, c. 13, cited by Reuter.

³ "He had the clearest head in the whole ninth century; and as an influence (*Mann der Tendenz*) is above comparison" (Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 24). As to his acute handling of the thorny question of reason and authority, see Reuter, i, 40-41.

⁴ Poole, pp. 50-52.

⁵ Noack, *Philosophie-Geschichtliches Lexikon*, s. v. RABANUS. As to the doubtful works in which Rabanus coincides with Scotus Erigena, cp. Poole, p. 336; Noack, as cited; Ueberweg, i, 367-8.

⁶ Ueberweg, pp. 366, 371; Poole, pp. 99, 101, 336.

⁷ Ueberweg, pp. 356-365. That there was, however, an Irish scholasticism as early as the eighth century is shown by Mosheim, 8 Cent.,

That John the Scot was an Irishman remains practically certain, even if we give up the term "Erigena," which, as has been shown by Floss, the most careful editor of his works, is not found in the oldest MSS. The reading there is Ierugena, which later shades into Erugena and Eriugena. (Cp. Ueberweg, i, 359; Poole, pp. 55-56, *note*; and Huber, *Johannes Scotus Erigena: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie im Mittelalter*, 1861, pp. 38-40.) From this elusive cognomen no certain inference can be drawn; too many being open. But the name Scotus, occurring *without* the Ierugena, is common in old MSS.; and it is almost impossible that any save a Scot of Ireland should have possessed the scholarship of John in the ninth century. In the west, Greek scholarship and philosophy had been special to Ireland from the time of Pelagius; and it is from Greek sources that John draws his inspiration and cast of thought. M. Taillandier not unjustly calls the Ireland of that era "l'île des saints, mais aussi l'île des libres penseurs." (*Scot Érigène et la philosophie scolastique*, 1843, p. 64.) To the same effect Huber, pp. 40-41. In writing that Johannes "was of Scottish nationality, but was probably born and brought up in Ireland," Ueberweg (i, 358) obscures the fact that the people of Ireland *were* the Scoti of that period. All the testimony goes to show "that Ireland was called *Scotia*, and its ruling people *Scoti*, from the first appearance of these names down to the eleventh century. But that [the] present Scotland was called *Scotia*, or its people *Scoti*, before the eleventh century, not so much as *one* single authority can be produced" (Pinkerton, *Enquiry into the History of Scotland*, 1789, ii, 237). Irish Scots gave their name to Scotland, and it was adopted by the Teutonic settlers of the eleventh century.

Called in by Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, himself a normally superstitious believer,¹ to answer Gottschalk, John Scotus in turn was accused of heresy, as he well might be on many points of his treatise, *De Praedestinatione*² (851). He fiercely and not very fairly condemned Gottschalk as a heretic, charging him with denying both divine grace and free-will, but without

Pt. ii, ch. iii, § 6, *note* 3. Cp. Huber, *Johannes Scotus Erigena*, 1861, p. 428 sq.; Taillandier, *Scot Érigène et la philosophie scolastique*, 1843, p. 198.

¹ Lea, as cited, p. 280.

² "The learned and freethinking guest of Charles le Chauve," Hardwick calls him, p. 176. It needed the protection of Charles to save him from the orthodox, Hincmar included. See Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de la France*, 1840, iii, 94-95, as to the anger against him.

disposing of Gottschalk's positive grounds ; and arguing that God could not be the cause of sin, as if Gottschalk had not said the same thing. His superior speculative power comes out in his undertaking to show that for the Divine Being sin is *non-ens*, and that therefore that Being cannot properly be said either to foreknow or to predestinate, or to punish. But the argument becomes inconsistent inasmuch as it further affirms Deity to have so constituted the order of things that sin punishes itself.¹ It is evident that in assimilating his pantheistic conceptions he had failed to think out their incompatibility with any theistic dogma whatever ; his reasoning, on the whole, being no more coherent than Gottschalk's. He had in fact set out from an arbitrary theistic position that was at once Judaic, Christian, and Platonic, and went back on one line to the Gnostics ; while on another his argument that sin has no real existence is a variant from an old thesis—made current, as we saw, by Euclides of Megara—with which orthodoxy had met the Manicheans.² But to the abstract doctrine he gave a new practical point by declaring that the doctrine of hell fire was a mere allegory ; that heaven and hell alike were states of consciousness, not places.³ And if such concrete freethinking were not enough to infuriate the orthodox, they had from him the most explicit declarations that authority is derivable solely from reason.⁴

In philosophy proper he must be credited, despite his inconsistency, with deep and original thought.⁵ Like every theologian of philosophic capacity before and since, he passes into pantheism as soon as he grapples

¹ See the whole argument summarised by Huber, p. 59 sq.

² Cp. Poole, *Illustrations*, pp. 61, 63, 65 ; Neander, Bohn trans. vi, 198 sq. ; and the present writer's introduction to Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, ed. 1900, p. xxxiv. And see above, p. 180.

³ *De divisione Naturæ*, l. v ; *De Prædestinatione*, ch. 17 ; Poole, pp. 71-72 ; Neander, vi, 198-9 ; Huber, as cited, p. 405.

⁴ In the treatise *On the Division of Nature*. See the extracts given in the Cabinet Cyclopædia survey of *Europe in the Middle Ages*, ii, 266-8. They prove, says the author of the survey, "that John Erigena had none of the spirit of Christianity."

⁵ Poole, pp. 64, 76.

closely with the difficulties of theism, and "the expressions which he uses are identical with those which were afterwards employed by Spinoza.....It was a tradition of the fourth or fifth century transferred to the ninth, an echo from Alexandria."¹ Condemned by Pope Nicholas I and by two Church Councils,² his writings none the less availed to keep that echo audible to later centuries.

The range and vigour of his practical rationalism may be gathered from his attitude in the controversy begun by the abbot Paschasius Radbert (831) on the nature of the Eucharist. Paschasius taught that there was a real transformation of the bread and wine into the divine body and blood; and the doctrine, thus nakedly put, startled the freer scholars of the time, who were not yet habituated to Latin orthodoxy. Another learned monk, Ratramnus, who had written a treatise on predestination at the request of the rationalising emperor, Charles the Bald (discussing the problem in Gottschalk's sense³ without naming him), produced on the same monarch's invitation a treatise in which transubstantiation was denied, and the "real presence" was declared to be spiritual⁴—a view already known to Paschasius as being held by some.⁵ John Scotus, also asked by the emperor to write on the subject, went so far as to argue that the bread and wine were merely symbols and memorials.⁶ As usual, the irrational doctrine became that of the Church;⁷ but the other must have wrought for reason in secret. For the rest, he set forth the old "modal" view of the Trinity, resolving it into the different conceptual aspects of the universe, and thus propounding one more vital heresy.⁸

Nothing but a succession of rationalising emperors

¹ S. Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, pp. 25-26.

² Huber, pp. 435-440.

³ Cp. Neander, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Bohn trans. vi, 192.

⁴ *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*, rep. Oxford, 1838, cc. 8-16, 29, 56, 72-76, etc.

⁵ C. 19: "Non sicut quidam volunt, anima sola hoc mysterio pascitur." Neander, vi, 210.

⁶ Hardwick, pp. 178, 181; Neander, vi, 217.

⁷ Cp. Neander, vi, 219.

⁸ Poole, p. 69.

could have secured continuance for such teaching as that of Ratramnus and John the Scot. For a time, the cruelty meted out to Gottschalk kept up feeling in favour of his views; Bishop Remigius of Lyons condemned Hincmar's treatment of him; and others sought to maintain his positions, with modifications, though Hincmar carried resolutions condemning them at the second synod of Chiersy. On the other hand, Archbishop Wenilo of Sens, Bishop Prudentius of Troyes, and Florus a deacon of Lyons, all wrote against the doctrines of John the Scot; and the second synod of Valence (855), while opposing Hincmar and affirming duplex predestination, denounced with fury the reasonings of John the Scot, ascribing them to his nation as a whole.¹ The pope taking the same line, the fortunes of the rationalistic view of the eucharist and of hell-fire were soon determined for the Middle Ages, though in the year 950 we find the Archbishop of Canterbury confronted by English ecclesiastics who asserted that there was no transubstantiation, the elements being merely a figure of the body and blood of Christ.²

The economic explanation clearly holds alike as regards the attack on John and the condemnation of Gottschalk for a doctrine which had actually been established for centuries, on the authority of Augustine, as strict orthodoxy. In Augustine's time, the determining pressures were not economic: a bankrupt world was seeking to explain its fate; and Augustine had merely carried a majority with him against Pelagius, partly by his personal influence, partly by force of the fatalist mood of the time. But in Gottschalk's day the economic exploitation of fear had been carried several stages forward by the church; and the question of predestination had a very direct financial bearing. The northern peoples, accustomed to compound for crimes by money payments, had so readily played into the hands of the priesthood

¹ C. 6: "Ineptas quæstiunculas et aniles pæne fabulas *Scotorumque* pulles." Neander, vi, 207.

² Neander, vi, 219, citing Mabillon, *Analecta*, i, 207.

by their eagerness to buy surcease of purgatorial pain, that masses for the dead and "penitential certificates" were main sources of ecclesiastical revenue. Therefore the condemnations of such abuses passed by the Councils, on the urging of the more thoughtful clergy, were constantly frustrated by the plain pecuniary interest of the priests.¹ It even appears that the eucharist was popularly regarded not as a process of religious "communion," but as a magical rite objectively efficacious for bodily preservation in this life and the next. Thus it came about that often "priests presented the offering of the mass alone and by themselves, without any participation of the congregation."²

If then it were to be seriously understood that the future lot of all was foreordained, all expenditure on masses for the dead, or to secure in advance a lightening of purgatorial penance, or even to buy off penance on earth, was so much waste; and the Teutons were still as ready as other barbarians to make their transactions with church, God, and the saints a matter of explicit bargain.³ Gottschalk, accordingly, had to be put down, in the general interests of the church. It could not truthfully be pretended that he deviated from Augustine, for he actually held by the "semi-Pelagian" inconsistency that God predestinates good, but merely foreknows evil.⁴ There was in fact no clear opposition between his affirmations and those of Rabanus Maurus,

¹ Compare the *Gemma Ecclesiastica* of Giraldus Cambrensis for an inside view of the avarice of the clergy in his day.

² Neander, *Hist. of the Chr. Rel. and Church*, Bohn trans. v, 187. See the whole section for a good account of the general economic and moral evolution. Neander repeatedly (pp. 186-7) insists on the "magical" element in the doctrine of the mass, as established by Gregory the Great.

³ See Neander, as cited, v, 183. The point was well put some centuries later by the Italian story-teller Masuccio, an orthodox Catholic but a vehement anti-clericalist, in a generalisation concerning the monks: "The best punishment for them would be for God to abolish Purgatory; they would then receive no more alms, and would be forced to go back to their spades." (Cited by Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, Eng. trans. 1892, p. 461.)

⁴ Neander, vi, 182. Rabanus Maurus distinctly belied him on this score. (*Id.* p. 183.)

who also professed to be an Augustinian ; but the latter laid forensic stress on the "desire" of God that all men should be saved, and on the formula that Christ died for all ; while Gottschalk, more honestly, insisted that predestination is predestination, and applied the principle not merely, as had been customary, to the future state of the good, but to that of the bad,¹ insisting on a *prædestinatio duplex*. His own fate was thus economically predestinate ; and he was actually tortured by the scourge till he cast into the fire his written defence, "a document which contained nothing but a compilation of testimonies from Scripture, and from the older church-teachers."²

Gottschalk later challenged a fourfold ordeal of "boiling water, oil, and pitch." His primary doctrine had been the immutability of the divine will ; but he brought himself to the belief that God would work a miracle in his favour. His conception of "foreordination" was thus framed solely with regard to the conception of a future state. The ordeal was not granted, the orthodox party fearing to try conclusions, and he died without the sacraments, rather than recant. Then began the second reaction of feeling against his chief persecutor, Hincmar. Neander, vi, 190.

A recent writer, who handles very intelligently and temperately the problem of persecution, urges that in that connection "one ought not to lay great stress on the old argument of the Hallam and Macaulay school as to the strength of vested interests, though it has a certain historical importance, because the priest must subsist somehow" (*Religious Persecution: a Study in Psychology*, by E. S. P. Haynes, 1904, p. 4). If the "certain importance" be in the ratio of the certainty of the last adduced fact, the legitimate "stress" on the argument in question would seem sufficient for most purposes. The writer adds the note : "It is not unfair, however, to quote the case of Dr. Middleton, who, writing to Lord Radnor in 1750 in respect of his famous work on Miracles, admits frankly enough that he would never have given the clergy any trouble, had he received some good appointment in the church." If the essayist has met with no other historic fact illustrative of the

¹ Formerly, only the saved had been spoken of as *prædestinati*, the reprobate being called *præsciti*. Neander, vi, 181.

² Neander, vi, 187. Cp. Hampden, Bampton Lectures on *The Scholastic Philosophy*, 3rd ed. p. 418 ; and Ampère, *Histoire littéraire de France*, 1840, iii, 92.

play of vested interests in ecclesiastical history, it is extremely candid of him to mention that one. Later on, however, he commits himself to the proposition that "the history of medieval persecution leads one to infer that the clergy as a whole were roused to much greater activity by menaces to their material comforts in this world than by an altruistic anxiety for the fate of lay souls in the next" (*Id.* p. 60. Cp. p. 63). This amount of "stress" on vested interests will probably satisfy most members of the Hallam and Macaulay school; and is ample for the purposes of the present contention.

From this point onward, the movement of new ideas may for a time be conveniently traced on two general lines, one that of the philosophic discussion in the schools, reinforced by Saracen influences, the other that of partially rationalistic and democratic heresy among the common people, by way first of contagion from the East. The latter was on the whole as influential for sane thought as the former, apart from such ecclesiastical freethinking as that of Berengar of Tours and Roscelin, Canon of Compiègne. Berengar (circa 1050) was led by moral reflection¹ to doubt the priestly miracle of the Eucharist, and thenceforth he entered into a stormy controversy on the subject, in the course of which he twice recanted under bodily fear, but passionately returned to his original positions. Fundamentally sincere, and indignantly resentful of the gross superstition prevailing in the church, he struck fiercely in his writings at Popes Leo IX and Nicholas II and Archbishop Lanfranc,² all of whom had opposed him. At length, after much strife, he threw up the contest, spending the latter part of his long life in seclusion; Pope Gregory VII, who was personally friendly to him, having finally shielded him from persecution. It seems clear that, though accused, with others of his school, of rejecting certain of the gospel miracles,³ he never became a disbeliever; his very polemic testifying to the warmth of his belief on his own lines. His teaching, however, which went far by reason of the

¹ Poole, p. 103. Cp. Neander, vi, 225.

² Neander, vi, 237-8.

³ *Id.* pp. 255-6.

vividness of his style, doubtless had the effect of promoting not only the rationalistic-Christian view of the Eucharist,¹ but a criticism which went further, inasmuch as his opponents forced on the bystanders the question as to what reality there was in the Christian creed if his view were true.² All such influences, however, were but slight in total mass compared with the overwhelming weight of the economic interest of the priesthood; and not till the Reformation was Berengar's doctrine accepted by a single organised sect. The orthodox doctrine, in fact, was all-essential to the Catholic church. Given the daily miracle of the "real presence," the church had a vital hold on the Christian world, and the priest was above all lay rivalry. Seeing as much, the Council of the Lateran (1059) met the new criticism by establishing the technical doctrine of the real presence for the first time as an article of faith; and as such it will doubtless stand while there is a Catholic priesthood. Berengar's original view must have been shared by thousands; but no Catholic carried on his propaganda. The question had become one of life and death.

Berengar's forced prevarications, which are unsympathetically set forth by Mosheim (11 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. iii, §§ 13-18), are made much more intelligible in the sympathetic survey of Neander (vi, 225-260). See also the careful inquiry of Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 91, sq. As to his writings, see also Murdock's note to Mosheim, last cit., § 18. The formal compromise forced on him by Pope Hilbrand, who was personally friendly to him, consisted in adding to his denial of the change of the bread and wine into "body and blood" the doctrine that the body and blood were "super-added to the bread and wine in and by their consecration." This formula of course did not represent the spirit of Berengar's polemic. As to the disputes on the subject, which ran to the most unseemly length of physiological detail, see Voltaire, *Essai sur les Mœurs*, ch. xlv. It is noteworthy that Augustine had very expressly set forth a metaphorical interpretation of the eucharist—*De doctrina christiana*, l. iii, c. 16. But just as

¹ Neander, p. 257.

² *Id.* p. 258. As to the wide extent of the discussion, see Reuter, *Geschichte der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 112.

the church later set aside the verdict of Thomas Aquinas that the Virgin Mary was "born in sin," so did it reverse Augustine's judgment on the Eucharist. Always the more irrational view carried the day, as being more propitious to sacerdotal claims.

Roscelin (or Roussellin : fl. 1090), on the other hand, is interesting as having made a critical approach to freethought in religion by way of abstract philosophy. With him definitely begins the long academic debate between the Nominalists and Realists so called. In an undefined way, it had existed as early as the ninth century,¹ the ground being the Christian adoption of Plato's doctrine of ideas—that individual objects are instances or images of an ideal universal, which is a real existence, and prior to the individual thing : "*universalia ante rem*." To that proposition Aristotle had opposed the doctrine that the universal is immanent in the thing —"*universalia in re*"—the latter alone being matter of knowledge ;² and in the Middle Ages those who called Aristotle master carried his negation of Plato to the extent of insisting that the "universal" or "abstract," or the "form" or "species," is a mere subjective creation, a name, having no real existence. This, the Nominalist position—mistakenly ascribed to Aristotle³—was ultimately expressed in the formula, "*universalia post rem*."

Such reasonings obviously tend to implicate theology ; and Roscelin was either led or helped by his Nominalist training to deny either explicitly or implicitly the unity of the Trinity, arguing in effect that, as only individuals are real existences, the actuality of the persons of the Trinity involves their disunity.⁴ The thesis, of course, evoked a storm, the English Archbishop Anselm and others producing indignant answers. Of Roscelin's writing only one letter is extant ; and even Anselm, in criticising his alleged doctrine, admits having gathered it only from his opponents, whose language suggests perversion.⁵ But if the testimony of his pupil Abailard

¹ Ueberweg, i, 366 ; Poole, pp. 99, 100.

² As to the verbal confusion of Aristotle's theory, see Ueberweg.

³ *Id.* i, 160.

⁴ *Id.* i, 375.

⁵ Cp. Mosheim's note, Reid's ed. p. 388.

be truthful,¹ he was at best a confused reasoner ; and in his theology he got no further than tritheism, then called ditheism.² Thus, though "Nominalism, by denying any objective reality to general notions, led the way directly to the testimony of the senses and the conclusions of experience,"³ it did so on lines fatally subordinate to the theology it sought to correct. Roscelin's thesis logically led to the denial not only of trinity-in-unity but of the Incarnation and transubstantiation : yet neither he nor his opponents seem to have thought of the last consequence, he having in fact no consciously heretical intention. Commanded to recant by the Council of Soissons in 1092, he did so, and resumed his teaching as before ; whereafter he was ordered to leave France. Coming to England, he showed himself so little of a rebel to the papacy as to contend strongly for priestly celibacy, arguing that all sons of priests and all born out of wedlock should alike be excluded from clerical office. Expelled from England in turn for these views, by a clergy still anti-celibate, he returned to Paris, to revive the old philosophic issue, until general hostility drove him to Aquitaine, where he spent his closing years in peace.⁴

Such handling of the cause of Nominalism gave an obvious advantage to Realism. That has been justly described by one clerical scholar as "Philosophy held in subordination to Church-Authority";⁵ and another has avowed that "the spirit of Realism was essentially the spirit of dogmatism, the disposition to pronounce that truth was already known," while "Nominalism was essentially the spirit of progress, of inquiry, of criticism."⁶ But even a critical philosophy may be

¹ Ueberweg, i, 374.

² Poole, p. 104, *note* ; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, i, 54.

³ Hampden, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 71.

⁴ Mosheim, as cited, and refs.

⁵ Hampden, p. 70.

⁶ A. S. Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, 1862, p. 111. Farrar adds : " '*Neque enim quaero intelligere ut credam, set credo ut intelligam*' are the words of the Realist Anselm (*Prolog.* i, 43, ed. Gerberon) : '*Dubitando ad inquisitionem venimus ; inquirendo veritatem percipimus*' are those of the Nominalist Abailard (*Sic et Non*, p. 16, ed. Cousin)."

made to capitulate to authority, as even *à priori* metaphysic may be to a certain extent turned against it. Realism had been markedly heretical in the hands of John Scotus ; and in a later age the Realist John Huss was condemned to death—perhaps on political grounds, but not without signs of sectarian hate—by a majority of Nominalists at the Council of Constance. Everything depended on the force of the individual thinker and the degree of restraint put upon him by the authoritarian environment.¹ The world has even seen the spectacle of a professed indifferentist justifying the massacre of St. Bartholomew ; and the Platonist Marsilio Ficino vilified Savonarola, basely enough, after his execution, adjusting a pantheistic Christianity to the needs of the political situation in Medicean Florence. Valid free-thinking is a matter of thoroughness and rectitude, not of mere theoretic assents.

Tried by that test, the Nominalism of the medieval schools was no very potent emancipator of the human spirit, no very clear herald of freedom or new concrete truth. A doctrine which was so far adjusted to authority as to affirm the unquestionable existence of three deities, Father, Son, and Spirit, and merely disputed the not more supra-rational theorem of their unity, yielded to the rival philosophy a superiority in the kind of credit it sought for itself. Nominalism was thus “driven to the shade of the schools,” where it was “regarded entirely in a logical point of view, and by no means in its actual philosophic importance as a speculation concerning the grounds of human knowledge.”² For Roscelin himself the question was one of dialectics, not of faith, and he made no practical rationalists. The popular heresies bit rather deeper into life.³

It is doubtless true of the Paulicians that “there was no principle of development in their creed : it reflected no genuine

¹ Cp. Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i, ch. 19, as to orthodoxy among both Nominalists and Realists.

² Hampden, pp. 70, 449.

³ Cp. Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, iii, 550.

freedom of thought" (Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 95); but the same thing, as we have seen, is clearly true of scholasticism itself. It may indeed be urged that "the contest between Ratramn and Paschase on the doctrine of the Eucharist; of Lanfranc with Berengar on the same subject; of Anselm with Roscelin on the nature of Universals; the complaints of Bernard against the dialectical theology of Abelard; are all illustrations of the collision between Reason and Authority.....varied forms of rationalism—the pure exertions of the mind within itself..... against the constringent force of the Spiritual government" (Hampden, Bampton Lectures on *The Scholastic Philosophy*, 3d ed. p. 37; cp. Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, p. 203); but none of the scholastics ever professed to set Authority aside. None dared. John Scotus indeed affirmed the identity of true religion with true philosophy, without professing to subordinate the latter; but the most eminent of the later scholastics affirmed such a subordination. "The vassalage of philosophy consisted in the fact that an impassable limit was fixed for the freedom of philosophising in the dogmas of the Church" (Ueberweg, i, 357); and some of the chief dogmas were not allowed to be philosophically discussed; though, "with its territory thus limited, philosophy was indeed allowed by theology a freedom which was rarely and only by exception infringed upon" (*Ib.* Cp. Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 151). "The suspicion of originality was fatal to the reputation of the scholastic divine" (Hampden, pp. 46–47). The popular heresy, indeed, lacked the intellectual stimulus that came to the schools from the philosophy of Averroës; but it was the hardier movement of the two.

Apart from the schools, too, there was a notable amount of hardy freethinking among the imperialist nobles of northern Italy in the time of the emperors Henry IV and V, the attitude of enmity to the Holy See having the effect of encouraging a rude rationalism. In 1115, while Henry V was vigorously carrying on the war of investitures begun by his father, and formerly condemned by himself, the Countess Matilda of Tuscany bequeathed her extensive fiefs to the Papacy; and in the following year Henry took forcible possession of them. At this period the strife between the papal and the imperial factions in the Tuscan cities was at its fiercest; and the Florentine chronicler Giovanni Villani alleges that among many other heretics in 1115 and 1117 were

some "of the sect of the Epicureans," who "with armed hand defended the said heresy" against the orthodox.¹ The title of Epicurean in the time of Villani and Dante stood for an unbeliever in a future state.² As the Averroist philosophy had not yet risen, and such opinions were not yet current among the western Saracens, their bold assertion among the anti-papalists of Florence must be assigned either to a spontaneous growth of unbelief or to the obscure influence of the great poem of Lucretius, never wholly lost from Italian hands. But the Lucretian view of things among men of the world naturally remained a matter of private discussion, not of propaganda; and it was on the less rationalistic but more organised anti-clericalism that there came the doom of martyrdom. So with the simple deism of which we find traces in the polemic of Guibert de Nogent (d. 1124), who avowedly wrote his tract *De Incarnatione adversus Judæos* rather as an apology against unbelievers among the Christians;³ and again among the pilgrim community founded later in France in commemoration of Thomas à Becket.⁴ Such doubters said little, leaving it to more zealous reformers to challenge creed with creed.

§ 4.

The first Western traces of the imported Paulician heresy are about the year 1000,⁵ when a rustic of Châlons is heard of as destroying a cross and a religious picture, and asserting that the prophets are not wholly to be believed.⁶ From this time forward, the world having begun to breathe again after the passing of the year 1000 without any sign of the Day of Judgment, heresy begins to multiply, the chief movers being "distinguished by a

¹ *Istorie fiorentine*, iv, 29.

² See below, ch. x.

³ Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 167.

⁴ *Id.* i, 164-6.

⁵ In 945, however, Atto, bishop of Verceil, is found complaining that some people from the Italian border had introduced heresies.

⁶ Mosheim, 10 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v, § 3; Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 91.

tendency to rationalism."¹ In 1010 there is trace of it in Aquitaine.² In the year 1022 (or, as the date is sometimes put, in 1017) we hear of a secret society of so-called Manicheans at Orleans, ten canons of one church being members.³ An Italian woman was said to be the founder, and thirteen were burned alive on their refusal to recant. According to the records, they denied all miracles, including the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection; rejected baptism and the miracle of the eucharist; took the old "Docetic" view of Jesus, denying his actual humanity; and affirmed the eternity of matter and the non-creation of the world. They were also accused, like the first Christians, of promiscuous nocturnal orgies and of eating sacrificed infants; but unless such charges are to be held valid in the other case, they cannot be here.⁴ The stories told of the Manichean community who lived in the castle of Monforte, near Asti in Lombardy, in the years 1025-1040, and who at length were likewise burned alive, are similarly mixed with fable.⁵ On this case it is recorded that while the Archbishop of Milan investigated the heresy, the burning of the victims was the work of the fanatical populace of Milan, and was done against his will.

A less savage treatment may have made possible the alleged success of Gerhard, bishop of Cambray and Arras, in reconciling to the church at Arras, in 1025 or 1030, a number of laymen—also said to have been taught by an Italian—who as a body rejected all external worship, setting aside priestly baptism and the sacraments, penance and images, funeral rites, holy oil, church bells, cross-worship, altars and even churches—and denied

¹ Hardwick, p. 203.

² Kurtz, *History of the Christian Church*, Eng. trans. 1868, i, 435.

³ Hénault, *Abbrégé chronologique*, ann. 1022; Mosheim, 10 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v, § 3; De Potter, *L'Esprit de l'Eglise*, vi, 18-19; Poole, pp. 96-98; Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, i, 104, 108-9, 218; Gieseler, Per. III, Div. ii, § 46.

⁴ Cp. Murdock's note on Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 386; Monastier, *Hist. of the Vaudois Church*, p. 33; Waddington, p. 356; Hardwick, p. 203, note, and p. 207.

⁵ De Potter, pp. 20-21; Gieseler, as cited, p. 497; Lea, i, 104, 109.

the necessity of an order of priests.¹ None of the Protestants of a later age were so thorough-going; but the fact that many of the sect stood to the old Marcionite veto on marriage and the sexual instinct gives to their propaganda its own cast of fanaticism. This last tenet it seemingly was that gave the Paulicians their common Greek name of *cathari*,² "the pure," corrupted or assimilated in Italian to *gazzari*, whence presumably the German word for heretic, *Ketzer*.³ Such a doctrine had the double misfortune that if acted on it left the sect without the normal recruitment of members' children, while if departed from it brought on them the stigma of wanton hypocrisy; and as a matter of fact every movement of the kind, ancient and modern, seems to have contained within it the two extremes of asceticism and license, the former generating the latter.

It could hardly, however, have been the ascetic doctrine that won for the new heresy its vogue in medieval Europe; nor is it likely that the majority of the heretics even professed it. If, on the other hand, we ask how it was that in an age of dense superstition so many uneducated people were found to reject so promptly the most sacrosanct doctrines of the Church, it seems hardly less difficult to account for the phenomenon on the bare ground of their common sense. Critical common sense there must have been, to allow of it at all; but it is reasonable to suppose that then, as clearly happened later at the Reformation, common sense had a powerful stimulus in pecuniary interest.

With the evidence as to Christian practice in the

¹ Mosheim, as last cited, § 4; Gieseler, ii, 496 (§ 46); Hardwick, pp. 203, 204.

² Mosheim, 11 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v, § 2, and Murdock's notes; 12 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v, §§ 4, 5.

³ Hardwick, p. 306; Kurtz, i, 433. The derivation through the Italian is however disputed. Cp. Murdock's note to Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 385, and Gieseler, ii, 486. The *Chazari*, a Turkish (Crimean) people, partly Christian and partly Moslem in the 9th century (Gieseler, as cited), may have given the name of *Gazzari*, as *Bulgar* gave *Bougre*; and the German *Ketzer* may have come directly from *Chazar*. The Christianity of the Chazars, influenced by neighbourhood with Islam, seems to have been a very free syncretism.

fourth century on the one hand, and the later evidence as to clerical life on the other, we are certain of a common play of financial motive throughout the Middle Ages. And whereas it is intelligible that such rapacity as we have seen described by Libanius should evoke a heresy which rejected alike religious ceremonial and the claims of the priest, it is further reasonable to surmise that resentment of priestly rapacity and luxury helped men to similar heresy in Western Europe when the doctrine reached them. If any centuries are to be singled out as those of maximum profligacy and extortion among the clergy, they are the ninth and the three following.¹ It had been part of the policy of Charlemagne everywhere to strengthen the hands of the clergy by way of checking the power of the nobles ;² and in the disorder after his death the conflicting forces were in semi-anarchic competition. The feudal habit of appointing younger sons and underlings to livings wherever possible ; the disorders and strifes of the papacy ; and the frequent practice of dispossessing priests to reward retainers, thereby driving the dispossessed to plunder on their own account, must together have created a state of things almost past exaggeration. It was a matter of course that the clergy on their part should make the utmost possible use of their influence over men's superstitious fears in order to acquire bequests of lands ;³ and such bequests in turn exasperated the heirs thus disinherited.

Thus orthodoxy and heterodoxy alike had strong economic motives ; and in these may be placed a main part of the explanation of the gross savagery of persecution now normal in the church. Such a heresy as that of Gottschalk, we saw, by denying to the priest all

¹ Cp. Gieseler, *Per.* III, §§ 24, 34 ; Mosheim, 9 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 1-4 ; with his and Murdock's refs. ; 10 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 1, 2 ; 11 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. ii, § 1 ; ch. iii, §§ 1-3 ; 12 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. ii, § 1 ; 13 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 1-7. The authorities are often eminent Churchmen, as Agobard, RATHERIUS, Bernard, and Gregory VIII.

² See Mosheim, 8 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. ii, § 5, *note* 2. Cp. Duruy, ii, 170.

³ Cp. Prof. Abdy, *Lectures on Feudalism*, 1890, p. 72.

power of affecting the predestined course of things here or hereafter, logically imperilled the very existence of the whole hierarchy, and was by many resented accordingly. The same principle entered into the controversies over the eucharist. Still more would the clergy resent the new Manichean heresy, of which every element, from the Euchite tenet of the necessity of personal prayer and mortification, as against the innate demon, to the rejection of all the rites of normal worship and all the pretensions of priests, was radically hostile to the entire organisation of the church. When the heretics in due course developed a priestly system of their own,¹ the hostility was only the more embittered.

The crisis was the more acute, finally, because in the latter part of the tenth century the common expectation that the world would end with the year 1000 had inspired enormous donations to the church,² with a proportionally oppressive effect on the general population, moving them to economic self-defence. It is in fact clear that an anti-clerical element entered largely into the beginnings of the communal movement in France in the eleventh century. In 1024 we find the citizens of Cambrai forming a league to drive out the canons;³ and though that beginning of revolt was crushed out by massacre, the same spirit expressed itself in heresy. The result was that religious persecution ere long eclipsed political. Bishop Wazon of Lüttich (d. 1048) in vain protested against the universal practice of putting the heretics to death.⁴ Manicheans found in 1052 at Goslar, in Germany, were hanged,⁵ a precedent being thus established in the day of small things.

All this went on while the course of the papacy was so scandalous to the least exacting moral sense that only

¹ Mosheim, 12 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v, § 6.

² Cp. Morin, *Origines de la démocratie*, 3e éd. pp. 164-5; Mosheim, 10 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. iii, § 3.

³ Morin, p. 168. Compare, on the whole communal movement, Duruy, *Hist. de France*, ch. xxi, and Michelet.

⁴ Gieseler, *Per. III*, § 46, *end*; Lea, i, 109, 218.

⁵ Monastier, *Hist. of the Vaudois Ch.*, p. 32; Lea, i, 110.

the ignorance of the age could sustain any measure of reverence for the church as an institution. In the year 963 the ablest of the emperors of that age, Otto the Great, had the consent of the people of Rome to his deposition of Pope John XII, a disorderly youth of twenty-five, "the most profligate if not the most guilty of all who have worn the tiara,"¹ and to his appointing the Pope in future; but Teutonic administration soon drove the populace to repeated revolt, quenched by massacre, till at length John returned, speedily to be slain by a wronged husband. Economic interest entered largely into the subsequent attempts of the Romans to choose their own Pope and rule their own city, and into the contrary claim of the emperors to do both; and in the nature of things the usually absent emperors could only spasmodically carry their point. The result was an epoch of riotous disorder in the papacy. Between John and Leo IX (955-1048) six popes were deposed, two murdered, and one mutilated;² and the church was a mere battle-ground of the factions of the Roman and Italian nobility.³ At last, in 1047, "a disgraceful contest between three claimants of the papal chair shocked even the reckless apathy of Italy";⁴ and the emperor Henry III deposed them all and appointed a pope of his own choosing, the clergy again consenting. Soon, however, as before, the local claim was revived; and in the papacy of the powerful Gregory VII, known as Hildebrand, the head of the church determinedly asserted its autonomy and his own autocracy. Then came the long "war of the investitures" between the popes and the emperors, in which the former were substantially the gainers. The result was, in addition to the endless miseries set up by

¹ Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 8th ed. p. 134. See p. 135 for a list of John's offences; and cp. p. 85 as to other papal records. For a contemporary account of Pope Honorius II (d. 1130) see Milman, *Latin Christianity*, iii, 448-9.

² Hallam, *Middle Ages*, 11th ed. ii, 174.

³ Cp. Müller, *Allgemeine Geschichte*, B. xiv, Cap. 17.

⁴ Bryce, p. 152.

war, a systematic development of that financial corruption which already had been scandalous enough. The cathedral chapters and the nobles traded in bishoprics; the popes sold their ratifications for great sums; the money was normally borrowed by the bishops from the papal usurers; and there was witnessed throughout Europe the spectacle of the church denouncing all usury as sin, while its own usurers were scrupulously protected, the bishops paying to them their interest from the revenues they were able to extort.¹ Satirical comment naturally abounded wherever men had any knowledge of the facts; and what current literature there was reflected the feeling on all hands.

The occurrence of the first and second crusades, the work respectively of Peter the Hermit and St. Bernard, created a period of new fanaticism, somewhat unfavourable to heresy; but even in that period the new sects were at work,² and in the twelfth century, when crusading had become a mere feudal conspiracy of conquest and plunder,³ heresy reappeared, to be duly met by slaughter. A perfect ferment of anti-clerical heresy had arisen in Italy, France, and Flanders.⁴ At Orvieto, in Italy, the heretics for a time actually had the mastery, and were put down only after a bloody struggle.⁵ In France, for a period of twenty years from 1100, Peter de Brueys opposed infant baptism, the use of churches, holy crosses, prayers for the dead (the great source of clerical income), and the doctrine of the Real Presence in the eucharist (the main source of their power), and so set up the highly heretical sect of Petrobrussians.⁶ Driven from his native district of Vallonise, he long maintained himself in Gascony, till at length he was seized and burned (1126 or 1130). The monk Henry (died in prison 1148) took a similar line,

¹ "Janus," *The Pope and the Councils*, Eng. trans. pp. 178-9.

² Cp. Heeren, *Essai sur l'influence des Croisades*, 1808, p. 172.

³ Sir G. Cox, *The Crusades*, p. 111.

⁴ Cp. Lea, i, 111.

⁵ *Id.* p. 115.

⁶ Hardwick, p. 310; Lea, i, 68; Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 148-9; Mosheim, as last cited, § 7.

directly denouncing the clergy in Switzerland and France; as did Tanquelin in Flanders (killed by a priest, 1125); though in his case there seems to have been as much of religious hallucination as of the contrary.¹ A peasant, Eudo of Stella (who died in prison), is said to have half-revolutionised Brittany with his anti-ecclesiastical preaching.² The more famous monk Arnold of Brescia (strangled and burned in 1155), a pupil of Abailard, but orthodox in his theology and austere in his life, simplified his plan of reform (about 1139) into a proposal that the whole wealth of the clergy, from the Pope to the monks, should be transferred to the civil power, leaving churchmen to lead a spiritual life on voluntary offerings.³ For fifteen years the stir of his movement lasted in Lombardy, till at length his formation of a republic at Rome forced the Papacy to combine with the Emperor Frederick II, who gave Arnold up to death. But though his movement perished, anti-clericalism did not; and heretical sects of some kind persisted here and there, in despite of the church, till the age of the Reformation. In Italy, during the age of the Renaissance, all alike were commonly called *paterini* or *patarini*—a nickname which seems to come from *pataria*, a Milanese word meaning “popular faction” or “rowdies.”⁴ Thus in the whole movement of fresh popular thought there is a manifest connection with the democratic movement in politics, though in the schools the spirit of discussion and dialectic had no similar relationship.

During the first half of the century, its warfare with the emperors, and the frequent appointment of anti-popes, prevented any systematic policy on the part of

¹ Cp. Motley, *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, ed. 1863, p. 36.

² Mosheim, 12 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v, §§ 7-9, and varior. notes; Monastier, pp. 38-41, 43-47; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, v. 384-390.

³ Hardwick, p. 267; Mosheim, as last cited, § 10; Monastier, p. 49.

⁴ Hardwick, p. 204, *note*; Kurtz, i, 433. Cp. the *Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society*, 1875-6, Pt. ii, p. 313; Mosheim, 11 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. ii, § 13, and *note*; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, v, 401. On the sects in general see De Potter, vi, 217-310; and Cantù, *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, 1865, i, 149-153.

the Holy See,¹ repression being mostly left to the local ecclesiastical authorities. It was in 1139 that Innocent II issued the first papal decree against Cathari, expelling them from the Church and calling on the temporal power to give full effect to their excommunication.² In 1163, Pope Alexander III, being exiled from Rome by Frederick I and the anti-pope Victor, called a great council at Tours, where again a policy of excommunication was decided on, the secular authorities being commanded to imprison the excommunicated and confiscate their property, but not to slay them. In the same year, some Cathari arrested at Cologne had been sentenced to be burned ; but the Council did not go so far. As a result the decree had little or no effect.³

So powerless was the church at this stage that in 1167 the Cathari held a council of their own near Toulouse ; a bishop of their order, Nicetas, coming from Constantinople to preside ; and a whole system of French sees was set on foot.⁴ So numerous had the Cathari now become that their highest grade, the *perfecti*, alone was reckoned to number 4,000 ;⁵ and from this time it is of Cathari that we read in the rolls of persecution. About 1170 four more of them, from Flanders, were burned at Cologne ; and others, of the higher grade called *bos homes* (= *boni homines*, "good men"), at Toulouse. In 1179, the heresy still gaining ground, an œcumenical council (the Third Lateran) was held at Rome under Pope Alexander III decreeing afresh their excommunication ; and setting up a new machinery of extirpation by proclaiming a crusade at once against the orderly heretics of southern France and the companies of openly irreligious freebooters who had arisen as a result of many wars and much misgovernment. To all who joined in the crusade was offered an indulgence of two years. In the following

¹ Lea, i, 115.

² *Id.* pp. 117-118.

³ *Id.* p. 119.

⁴ Kurtz, i, 435 ; Lea, i, 119.

⁵ Hardwick, p. 308, *note* ; Murdock's note to Mosheim, p. 426 ; Monastier, pp. 106-7.

year Henry of Clairvaux, Cardinal of Albano, took the matter in hand as papal plenipotentiary, and in 1181 he raised a force of horse and foot and fell upon the ill-defended territory of the Viscount of Beziers, where many heretics, including the daughter of Raymond of Toulouse, had taken refuge. The chief stronghold was captured, with two Catharist bishops, who renounced their heresy, and were promptly given prebends in Toulouse. Many others submitted; but as soon as the terms for which the crusaders had enlisted were over and the army disbanded they returned to their heretical practices.¹ Two years later an army collected in central France made a campaign against the freebooters, slaying thousands in one battle, hanging fifteen hundred after another, and blinding eighty more. But freebooting also continued.²

The first crusade against heresy having failed, it was left by the papacy for a number of years to itself; though anti-pope Lucius III in 1184 sought to set up an Inquisition; and in 1195 a papal legate held a council at Montpellier, seeking to create another crusade. The zeal of the faithful was mainly absorbed in Palestine; while the nobles at home were generally at war with each other. Heresy accordingly continued to flourish, though there was never any suspension of local persecution outside of Provence, where the heretics were now in a majority, having more theological schools and scholars than the church.³ In France in particular, in the early years of the reign of Philip Augustus (suc. 1180), many *paterini* were put to death by burning;⁴ and the clergy at length persuaded the king to expel the Jews, the work being done almost as cruelly as it was two centuries later in Spain. In England, where there

¹ Lea, i, 124.

² *Id.* p. 126.

³ *Id.* pp. 127-8.

⁴ Kitchin, *History of France*, 4th ed. 1889, i, 286; citing *Chron. de St. Denis*, p. 350. The *Annales Victoriani* at Philip's death (1223) pronounce him *ecclesiarum et religionarum personarum amator et fautor* (Hénault's *Abrégé Chronologique*). Among the many Cathari put to death in his reign was Nicholas, the most famous painter in France—burned at Braine in 1204. Lea, i, 131.



was thus far little heresy, it was repressed by Henry II. Some thirty rustics came from Flanders in 1166, fleeing persecution, and vainly sought to propagate their creed. Zealous to prove his orthodoxy in the period of his quarrel with Becket, Henry presided over a council of bishops called by him at Oxford to discuss the case; and the heretics were condemned to be scourged, branded in the face, and driven forth—to perish in the winter wilds. “England was not hospitable to heresy”; and practically her orthodoxy was “unsullied until the rise of Wiclif.”¹

In southern Europe and northern Italy in the last quarter of the century a foremost place began to be taken by the sect of the Waldenses, or Vaudois (otherwise the Poor Men of Lyons), which—whether deriving from ancient dissent surviving in the Vaux or Valleys of Piedmont,² or taking its name and character from the teaching of the Lyons merchant, Peter Waldus, or an earlier Peter of Vaux or Valdis³—conforms substantially to the general heretical tendencies of that age, in that it rejected the Papal authority, contended for the reading of the Bible by the laity, condemned tithes, disparaged fasting, stipulated for poverty on the part of priests and denied their special status, opposed prayers for the dead, and preached peace and non-resistance. In 1199, at Metz, they were found in possession of a French translation of the New Testament, the Psalms, and the book of Job—a new and startling invasion of the priestly power in the west. Above all, their

¹ Lea, i, 113–114. Cp. Ranke, Eng. trans. 1-vol. ed. p. 13.

² Cp. Hardwick, p. 312; Mosheim, 12 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v, § 11, and notes in Reid's ed.; Monastier, *Hist. of the Vaudois Church*, Eng. trans. 1848, pp. 12–29; Faber, *The Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*, pp. 28, 284, etc. As Vigilantius took refuge in the Cottian Alps, his doctrine may have survived there, as argued by Monastier (p. 10) and Faber (p. 290). The influence of Claudius of Turin, as they further contend, might also come into play. On the whole subject see Gieseler, Per. III, Div. iii, § 88.

³ Cp. Mosheim with Faber, B. III, cc. 3, 8; Hardwick, as cited; and Monastier, pp. 53–82. Waddington, p. 353, holds Mosheim to be in error; and there are some grounds for dating the Waldensian heresy before Waldus, who flourished 1170–80 (*Id.* p. 354). Waldus had to flee from France, and finally died in Bohemia, 1197 (Kurtz, i, 439).

men and women alike went about preaching in the towns, in the houses, and in the churches, and administered the eucharist without priests.¹ Thus Cathari, paterini, Manicheans, and non-Manichean Albigenses and Waldenses were on all fours for the church, as opponents of its economic claims; and when at length, under Celestine III and Innocent III, the Holy See began to be consolidated after a long period of incessant change,² desperate measures began to be contemplated. Organised heresy was seen to be indestructible save by general extirpation; and on economic grounds it was not to be tolerated. At Orvieto, the heresy stamped out with blood in 1125 was found alive again in 1150; was again put down in 1163 by burning, hanging, and expulsion; and yet was again found active at the close of the century.³ In 1198 Innocent III is found beginning a new Inquisition among the Albigenses; and in 1199, while threatening them with exile and confiscation,⁴ he made a last diplomatic attempt to force the obstinately heretical people of Orvieto to take an oath of fidelity in the year 1199. It ended in the killing of his representative by the people.⁵ The Papacy accordingly laid plans to destroy the enemy at its centre of propagation.

§ 5.

In Provence and Languedoc, the scene of the first great Papal crusade against anti-clerical heresy, there were represented all the then existing forces of popular freethought; and the motives of the crusade were equally typical of the cause of authority.

1. In addition to the Paulician and other movements of religious rationalism above noted, the Languedoc

¹ Cp. Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, i, 73-88. Waldensian theology varied from time to time.

² Between 1153 and 1191 there were ten popes, three of them anti-popes. Celestine III held the chair from 1191 to 1198; and Innocent III from the latter year to 1216.

³ De Potter, vi, 26; Lea, i, 115.

⁴ Lea, i, 290.

⁵ De Potter, vi, 28.

region was a centre of semi-popular literary culture, which was to no small extent anti-clerical, and by consequence somewhat anti-religious. The Latin-speaking jongleurs or minstrels, known as Goliards,¹ possessing as they did a clerical culture, were by their way of life committed to a joyous rather than an ascetic philosophy; and though given to blending the language of devotion with that of the drinking-table, very much after the fashion of Hafiz, they were capable of burlesquing the mass, the creed, hymns to the Virgin, the Lord's Prayer, confessions, and parts of the gospels, as well as of keenly satirising the endless abuses of the Church.² Denounced by some of the stricter clergy, they were protected by others. They were in fact the minstrels of the free-living churchmen.³

2. A kindred spirit is seen in much of the verse alike of the northern Trouvères and the southern Troubadours. A modern Catholic historian of medieval literature complains that their compositions "abound with the severest ridicule of such persons and of such things as, in the temper of the age, were highly estimated and most generally revered," and notes that in consequence they were ranked by the devout as "lewd and impious libertines."⁴ In particular they satirised the practice of excommunication and the use made by the Church of Hell and Purgatory as sources of revenue.⁵ Their anti-clerical poetry having been as far as possible destroyed

¹ See Bartoli, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, 1878, i, 262, note, also his *I Proverbi del Rinascimento*, 1877, p. 37. In this section and in the next chapter I am indebted for various clues to the Rev. John Owen's *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*. As to the Goliards generally, see that work, pp. 38-45; Bartoli, *Storia*, cap. viii; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, B. xiv, c. 4; and Gebhart, *Les Origines de la Renaissance en Italie*, 1879, pp. 125-6. The name Goliard came from the type-name Goliath, used by many satirists.

² Bartoli, *Storia*, i, 271-9. Cp. Schlegel's note to Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 332, following Ratherius; and Gebhart, as cited. Milman (4th ed. ix, 1891) credits the Goliards with "a profound respect for sacred things, and freedom of invective against sacred persons." This shows an imperfect knowledge of much of their work.

³ Owen, as cited, pp. 43, 45; Bartoli, *Storia*, i, 293.

⁴ Rev. Joseph Berington, *Literary History of the Middle Ages*, ed. 1846, p. 229. Cp. Owen, p. 43.

⁵ Owen, p. 43; Bartoli, *Storia*, i, 295, as to the French *fabliaux*.

by the Inquisition, its character has to be partly inferred from the remains of the northern trouvères—*e.g.*, Ruteboeuf and Raoul de Houdan, of whom the former wrote a *Voya de Paradis*, in which Sloth is a canon and Pride a bishop, both on their way to heaven; while Raoul has a *Songe d'enfer* in which Hell is treated in a spirit of the most audacious burlesque.¹ The Provençal literature, further, was from the first influenced by the culture of the Saracens,² who held Sicily and Calabria in the ninth and tenth centuries, and had held part of Languedoc itself for a few years in the eighth. On the passing of the duchy of Provence to Raymond Berenger, Count of Barcelona, at the end of the eleventh century, not only were the half-Saracenised Catalans mixed with the Provençals, but Raymond and his successors freely introduced the arts and science of the Saracens into their dominion.³ In the Norman kingdom of Sicily, too, the Saracen influence was great even before the time of Frederick II; and thence it reached afresh through Italy to Provence,⁴ carrying with it everywhere, by way of poetry, an element of anti-clerical and even anti-Christian rationalism.⁵ Though this spirit was not that of the Cathari and Waldenses, yet the fact that the latter strongly condemned the Crusades⁶ was a point in common between them and the sympathisers with Saracen culture. And as the tolerant Saracen schools of Spain were in that age resorted to by the youth of all the countries of western Europe for scientific teaching⁷—all

¹ Labitte, *La divine comédie avant Dante*, in Charpentier ed. of Dante, pp. 133-4.

² Sismondi, *Literature of Southern Europe*, Eng. trans. i, 74-95.

³ Sismondi, as last cited, p. 76.

⁴ Zeller, *Histoire d'Italie*, 1853, p. 152; Renan, *Averroès*, p. 184.

⁵ "The Troubadours in truth were freethinkers" (Owen, *Italian Skeptics*, p. 48). Cp. Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, ii, 2; and Hardwick, p. 274, note 4, as to the common animus against the Papacy.

⁶ Heeren, *Essai sur l'influence des Croisades*, French trans. 1808, p. 174, note; Owen, *Italian Skeptics*, p. 44, note.

⁷ Sismondi, as cited, p. 82; Owen, pp. 66, 68; Mosheim, 11 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. i, § 4; 12 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. i, § 9, and Reid's note to § 8; Hampden, Bampton Lectures, p. 446. The familiar record that Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II, studied in Spain among the Arabs (Ueberweg, i, 369), has of late years been discredited (Olleris, *Vie de Gerbert*, 1867, ch. ii and

the latest medical and most other scientific knowledge being in their hands—the influence of such culture must have been peculiarly strong in Provence.¹

3. The medieval mystery-plays and moralities, already common in Provence, mixed at times with the normal irreverence of illiterate faith² a vein of surprisingly pronounced skeptical criticism,³ which at the least was a stimulus to critical thought among the auditors, even if they were supposed to take it as merely dramatic. Inasmuch as the drama was hereditarily pagan, and had been continually denounced and ostracised by Fathers and Councils,⁴ it would be natural that its practitioners, even when in the service of the church, should be unbelievers.

4. The philosophy and science of both the Arabs and the Spanish Jews were specially cultivated in the Provence territory. The college of Montpellier practised on Arab lines medicine, botany, and mathematics; and the Jews, who had been driven from Spain by the Almohades, had flourishing schools at Narbonne, Beziers, Nîmes, and Carcassonne, as well as Montpellier, and spread alike the philosophy of Averroës and the semi-rational theology of the Jewish thinker Maimonides,⁵ whose school held broadly by Averroism.

For the rest, every one of the new literary influences that were assailing the church would tend to flourish in such a civilisation as that of Languedoc, which had been peaceful and prosperous for over two hundred years. Its relative lack of military strength, therefore, as well as its pre-eminence in heresy, led Innocent III, a peculiarly

xxv; Ueberweg, p. 430; Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 88); but its very currency depended on the commonness of such a proceeding in his age.

¹ Sismondi, p. 83.

² Cp. G. H. Lewes, *The Spanish Drama*, 1846, pp. 11–14; Littré, *Études sur les barbares et le moyen âge*, 3e édit, p. 356.

³ See the passages cited by Mr. Owen, p. 58.

⁴ Cp. Bartoli, *Storia*, pp. 200–2.

⁵ Gebhart, *Les Origines de la Renaissance*, pp. 4, 17; Renan, *Averroës et l'Averroïsme*, pp. 145, 183, 185; Libri, *Hist. des sciences mathématiques en Italie*, i, 153; Michelet, *Hist. de France*, t. vii, *Renaissance*, introd., note du § vii; Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i, 382. Cp. Franck, *Études Orientales*, 1861, p. 357.

zealous assertor of the Papal power,¹ to attack it in preference to other and remoter centres of enmity. In the first year of his pontificate, 1198, he commenced a new and zealous Inquisition² in the doomed region ; and in the year 1207, when as much persecution had been accomplished as the lax faith of the nobility and many of the bishops would consent to—an appeal to the King of France to interfere being disregarded—the scheme of a crusade against the dominions of Raymond Count of Toulouse was conceived and gradually matured. The alternate weakness and obstinacy of Raymond, and the fresh provocation given by the murder, in 1208, of the arrogant papal legate, Pierre de Castelnau,³ permitted the success of the scheme in such hands. The crusade was planned exactly on the conditions of those against the Saracens—the heretics at home being declared far worse than they.⁴ The crusaders were freed from payment of interest on their debts, exempted from the jurisdiction of all law courts, and absolved from all their sins past or future.⁵ To earn this reward they were to give only forty days' service⁶—a trifle in comparison with the hardships of the crusades to Palestine. “Never therefore had the cross been taken up with a more unanimous consent.”⁷ Bishops and nobles in Burgundy and France, the English Simon de Montfort, the Abbot of Citeaux, and the Bernardine monks throughout Europe, combined in the cause ; and recruits came from

¹ As to the Pope's character compare Sismondi, *Hist. of the Crusades against the Albigenses* (Eng. trans. from vols. vi and vii of his *Histoire des Français*), p. 10 ; Hallam, *Europe during the Middle Ages*, 11th ed. ii, 198 ; Mosheim, 13 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 6–8.

² As to previous acts of inquisition and persecution by Pope Alexander III (noted above) see Llorente, *Hist. Crit. de l'Inquisition en Espagne*, French trans., 2e édit. i, 27–30, and Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, i, 118. Cp. Gieseler, *Per. III*, Div. iii, § 89 (Amer. ed. ii, 564).

³ Hardwick, p. 309 ; Lea, i, 145.

⁴ Sismondi, *Crusades against the Albigenses*, p. 21.

⁵ On the previous history of indulgences, see Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, i, 41–47 ; De Potter, *Esprit de l'Église*, vii, 22–39. For the later developments cp. Lea's *Studies in Church History*, 1869, p. 450 ; Vieusseux, *History of Switzerland*, 1840, pp. 121, 125.

⁶ *Id.* pp. 28–29.

⁷ Sismondi, *Crusades*, p. 23.

Austria and Saxony, from Bremen, even from Slavonia, as well as from northern France.¹ The result was such a campaign of crime and massacre as European history cannot match.² Despite the abject submission of the Count of Toulouse, who was publicly stripped and scourged, and despite the efforts of his nephew the Count of Albi to make terms, village after village was fired, all heretics caught were burned, and on the capture of the city and castle of Beziers (1209), every man, woman, and child within the walls was slaughtered, many of them in the churches, whither they had run for refuge. The legate, Arnold, abbot of Citeaux, being asked at an early stage how the heretics were to be distinguished from the faithful, gave the never-to-be-forgotten answer, "Kill all; God will know his own."³ Seven thousand dead bodies were counted in the great church of St. Mary Magdalene. The legate in writing estimated the total quarry at 15,000; others put the number at sixty thousand.⁴ When all in the place were slain, and all the plunder removed, the town was burned to the ground, not one house being left standing. Warned by the fate of Beziers, the people of Carcassone, after defending themselves for many days, secretly evacuated their town; but the legate contrived to capture a number of the fugitives, of whom he burned alive four hundred, and hanged fifty.⁵ Systematic treachery, authorised and prescribed by the Pope,⁶ completed the success of the undertaking. The Church had succeeded, in the name of religion, in bringing half of Europe to the attainment of the ideal height of wickedness, in that it had learned to make evil its good; and the Papacy

¹ Lea, i, 149.

² For a modern Catholic defence of the whole proceedings, see the Comte de Montalembert's *Histoire de Sainte Elisabeth de Hongrie*, 13e édit. intr., pp. 35-40.

³ Sismondi, *Crusades*, p. 35, and refs.; Lea, i, 154.

⁴ Sismondi, pp. 36-37, and refs.

⁵ *Id.* pp. 37-43.

⁶ *Id.* pp. 21, 41. Cp. p. 85 as to later treachery towards Saracens; and p. 123 as to the deeds of the Bishop of Toulouse. See again pp. 140-2 as to the massacre of Marmande.

had on the whole come nearer to destroying the moral sense of all Christendom¹ than any conceivable combination of other causes could ever have done in any age.

According to a long current fiction, it was the Pope who first faltered when "the whole of Christendom demanded the renewal of those scenes of massacre" (Sismondi, *Crusades*, p. 95); but this is disproved by the discovery of two letters in which, shortly before his death, he excitedly takes on himself the responsibility for all the bloodshed (Michelet, *Hist. de France*, vii, introd., note to § iv). Michelet had previously accepted the legend which he here rejects. The bishops assembled in council at Lavaur, in 1213, demanded the extermination of the entire population of Toulouse. Finally, the papal policy is expressly decreed in the third canon of the Fourth General Council of Lateran, 1215. On that canon see *The Statutes of the Fourth General Council of Lateran*, by the Rev. John Evans, 1843. On the crusade in general, cp. Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, B. i, c. 4; Gieseler, *Per. III*, Div. iii, § 89.

The first crusade was followed by others, in which Simon de Montfort reached the maximum of massacre, varying his procedure by tearing out eyes and cutting off noses when he was not hanging victims by dozens or burning them by scores or putting them to the sword by hundreds² (all being done "with the utmost joy")³; though the "White Company" organised by the Bishop of Toulouse⁴ maintained a close rivalry. The Church's great difficulty was that as soon as an army had bought its plenary indulgence for all possible sin by forty days' service it disbanded. Nevertheless, "the greater part of the population of the countries where heresy had prevailed was exterminated."⁵ Organised Christianity had contrived to murder the civilisation of Provence and Languedoc⁶ while the fanatics of Islam in their

¹ As to the international character of the crusade, see Sismondi, *Crusades*, p. 53.

² Sismondi, p. 62 sq.

³ Pp. 77, 78.

⁴ Pp. 74, 75.

⁵ P. 87. "The worship of the reformed Albigenses had everywhere ceased" (p. 115). Cp. p. 116 as to the completeness of the final massacres. It is estimated (Monastier, p. 115, following De la Mothe-Langon) that a million Albigenses were slain in the first half of the thirteenth century. The figures are of course speculative.

⁶ Cp. Lea, ii, 159.

comparatively bloodless manner were doing as much for that of Moorish Spain. Heresy indeed was not rooted out: throughout the whole of the thirteenth century the Inquisition met with resistance in Languedoc¹; but the preponderance of numbers which alone could sustain freethinking had been destroyed, and in course of time it was eliminated by the sleepless engines of the Church.

It was owing to no lack of the principle of evil in the Christian system, but simply to the much greater and more uncontrollable diversity of the political elements of Christendom, that the whole culture and intelligence of Europe did not undergo the same fate. The dissensions and mutual injuries of the crusaders ultimately defeated their ideal²; after Simon de Montfort had died in the odour of sanctity³ the crusade of Louis VIII of France in 1226 seems to have been essentially one of conquest, there being practically no heretics left; and the disasters of the expedition, crowned by the king's death, took away the old prestige of the movement. Meanwhile, the heresy of the Albigenses, and kindred ideas, had been effectually driven into other parts of Europe⁴; and about 1231 we find Gregory IX burning a multitude of them at the gates of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome,⁵ and compassing their slaughter in France and Germany.⁶ In Italy the murderous pertinacity of the Dominicans gradually destroyed organised heresy despite frequent and desperate resistance. About 1230 we hear of one eloquent zealot, chosen podestà by the people of Verona, using his power to burn in one day

¹ Lea, vol. ii, ch. i.

² Sismondi, pp. 115, 117.

³ *Id.* p. 133.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 235-9; Lea, ii, 247, 259, 319, 347, 429, etc.

⁵ Sismondi, p. 236; Llorente, as cited, i, 60-64; Lea, ii, 200.

⁶ Matthew Paris records that in 1249 four hundred and forty-three heretics were burned in Saxony and Pomerania. Previously multitudes had been burned by the inquisitor Conrad, who was himself finally murdered in revenge. He was the confessor of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, and he taught her among other things, "Be merciful to your neighbour," and "Do to others whatsoever you would that they should do to you." See his praises recorded by Montalembert, as cited, vol. i, ch. 10. Cp. Gieseler, *Per. III*, Div. iii, § 89 (ii, 567).

sixty heretics, male and female.¹ The political heterogeneity of Europe, happily, made variation inevitable; though the papacy, by making the detection and persecution of heresy a means of gain to a whole order of its servants, had set on foot a machinery for the destruction of rational thought such as had never before existed.

It is still common to speak of the *personnel* of the Inquisition as disinterested, and to class its crimes as "conscientious." Buckle set up such a thesis, without due circumspection, as a support to one of his generalisations. (See the present writer's ed. of his *Introduction to the History of Civilisation in England*, p. 109, *notes*, and the passages in McCrie and Llorente there cited.) Dr. Lea, whose *History of the Inquisition* is the greatest storehouse of learning on the subject, takes up a similar position, arguing (i, 239): "That the men who conducted the Inquisition, and who toiled sedulously in its arduous, repulsive, and often dangerous labour, were thoroughly convinced that they were furthering the kingdom of God, is shown by the habitual practice of encouraging them with the remission of sins, similar to that offered for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land"—a somewhat surprising theorem. Parallel reasoning would prove that soldiers never plunder and are always Godly; that the crusaders were all conscientious men; and that policemen never take bribes or commit perjury. The interpretation of history calls for a less unsophisticated psychology. That there were devoted fanatics in the Inquisition as in the Church is not to be disputed; that both organisations had economic bases is certain; and that the majority of office-bearers in both, in the ages of faith, had regard to gain, is demonstrated by all ecclesiastical history.

Dr. Lea's own History shows clearly enough (i, 471-533) that the Inquisition, from the first generation of its existence, lived upon its fines and confiscations. "Persecution, as a steady and continuous policy, rested, after all, upon confiscation..... When it was lacking, the business of defending the faith lagged lamentably" (i, 529). "But for the gains to be made out of fines and confiscations its [the Inquisition's] work would have been much less thorough, and it would have sunk into comparative insignificance as soon as the first frantic zeal of bigotry had exhausted itself" (pp. 532-3). Why, in the face of these avowals, "it would be unjust to say that greed and thirst for

¹ Lea, ii, 204. This was the "peace-maker" described by Dr. Lea as—in that capacity—"so worthy a disciple of the Great Teacher of divine love" (i, 240).

plunder were the impelling motives of the Inquisition" (p. 532) is not very clear. See below, Ch. X, § 3, as to the causation in Spain. Cp. Mocatta, *The Jews and the Inquisition*, pp. 37, 44, 52. On the Inquisition in Portugal, in turn, Professor W. E. Collins sums up that "it was founded for reasons ostensibly religious but actually fiscal" (in the "Cambridge Modern History," vol. II, *The Reformation*, ch. xii, p. 415). Every charge of economic motive that Catholicism can bring against Protestantism is thus balanced by the equivalent charge against its own Inquisition.

§ 6.

The indestructibility of freethought, meanwhile, was being proved even in the philosophic schools, under all their conformities to faith. Already in the ninth century we have seen Scotus Erigena putting the faith in jeopardy by his philosophic defence of it. In the eleventh century, the simple fact of the production of a new argument for the existence of God by Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, is a proof that, apart from the published disputes, a measure of doubt on the fundamental issue had arisen in the schools. It is urged¹ that, though the argumentation of Anselm seems alien to the thought of his time, there is no proof that the idea of proving the existence of God was in any way pressed on him from the outside. It is, however, inconceivable that such an argument should be framed if no one had raised a doubt. And as a matter of fact the question *was* discussed in the schools, Anselm's treatise being a reproduction of his teaching. The monks of Bec, where he taught, urged him to write a treatise wherein nothing should be proved by mere authority, but all by necessity of reason or evidence of truth, and with an eye to objections of all sorts.² In the preface to his *Cur Deus Homo*, again, he says that his first book is an answer to the objections of infidels who reject Christianity as irrational.³ Further, the nature of part of Anselm's

¹ Poole, *Illustr. of the Hist. of Medieval Thought*, pp. 104-5.

² *Præfatio in Monologium*.

³ As to the various classes of doubters known to Anselm, see Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 129-131, and refs.

theistic argument, and the very able but friendly reply of Gaunilo (a Count of Montigni, who entered a convent near Tours, 1044-1083), show that the subject was within the range of private discussion. Anselm substantially follows St. Augustine¹; and men cannot have read the ancient books which so often spoke of atheism without confronting the atheistic idea. It is not to be supposed that Gaunilo was an unbeliever; but his argumentation is that of a man who had pondered the problem.²

Despite the ostensibly rationalistic nature of his argument, however, Anselm stipulated for absolute submission of the intellect to the creed of the Church³; so that the original subtitle of his Proslogium, *Fides quaerens intellectum*, in no way admits rational tests. In the next century we meet with new evidence of sporadic unbelief, and new attempts to deal with it on the philosophic side. John of Salisbury (1120-1180) tells of having heard many discourse on physics "otherwise than faith may hold"⁴; and the same vivacious scholar put in his list of "things about which a wise man may doubt, so.....that the doubt extend not to the multitude," some "things which are reverently to be enquired about God himself."⁵ Giraldus Cambrensis (1147-1223), whose abundant and credulous gossip throws so much light on the inner life of the Church and the laity in his age, tells that the learned Simon of Tournay "thought not soundly on the articles of the faith," saying privately, to his intimates, things that he dared not utter publicly, till one day, in a passion, he

Anselm writes: *Fides enim nostra contra impios ratione defendenda est.* Epist. ii, 41.

¹ Ueberweg, i, 381.

² See it in Ueberweg, i, 384-5; cp. Ch. de Rémusat, *Saint Anselme*, 1853, pp. 61-2; Dean Church, *Saint Anselm*, ed. 1888, pp. 86-7. As to previous instances of Anselm's argument cp. Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 338 sq.

³ Cp. Ueberweg, i, 379-380.

⁴ Cited by Hampden, Bampton Lectures on *The Scholastic Philosophy*, 1848, p. 443.

⁵ *Metalogicus*, vii, 2; Poole, p. 223.

cried out, "Almighty God! how long shall this superstitious sect of Christians and this upstart invention endure?"; whereupon during the night he lost the power of speech, and remained helpless till his death.¹ Again, Giraldus tells how an unnamed priest, reproved by another for careless celebration of the mass, angrily asked whether his rebuker really believed in transubstantiation, in the incarnation, in the Virgin Birth, and in resurrection; adding that it was all carried on by hypocrites, and assuredly invented by cunning ancients to hold men in terror and restraint. And Giraldus comments that *inter nos* there are many who so think in secret.² As his own picture of the church exhibits a gross and almost universal rapacity pervading it from the highest clergy to the lowest, the statement is entirely credible.³ Yet again, in the Romance of the Holy Grail, mention is twice made of clerical doubters on the doctrine of the Trinity⁴; and on that side, in the crusading period, both the monotheistic doctrine of Islam and the Arab philosophy of Averroës were likely to set up a certain amount of skepticism. In the twelfth century, accordingly, we have Nicolas of Amiens producing his tractate *De articulis* (or *arte*) *catholicæ fidei* in the hope of convincing by his arguments men "who disdain to believe the prophecies and the gospel."⁵

To meet such skepticism, too, was one of the undertakings of the renowned ABAILARD (1079-1142), himself persecuted as a heretic for the arguments with which he sought to guard against unbelief. Of the details of his early life it concerns us here to note only that he studied under Roscelin, and swerved somewhat in philosophy

¹ *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, Distinctio i, c. 51; Works, ed. Brewer, Rolls Series, ii, 148-9; pref. p. xxxv.

² *Id.* Dist., ii, c. 24; pp. liv, 285.

³ Cp. Pearson, *Hist. of England during the Early and Middle Ages*, ii, 504.

⁴ *The Saynt Graal*, ed. Furnivall, 1861, pp. 7, 84; *History of the Holy Grail*, ed. Furnivall, 1874, pp. 5-7; Pearson, as cited, i, 606-7.

⁵ Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i, 502.

from his master's theoretic Nominalism, which he partly modified on Aristotelian lines, though knowing little of Aristotle.¹ After his retirement from the world to the cloister, he was induced to resume philosophic teaching; and his pupils, like those of Anselm, begged their master to give them rational arguments on the main points of the faith.² He accordingly rashly prepared a treatise, *De Unitate et Trinitate divina*, in which he proceeded "by analogies of human reason," avowing that the difficulties were great.³ Thereupon envious rivals, of whom he had made many by his arrogance as well as by his fame, set up against him a heresy hunt; and for the rest of his life he figured as a dangerous person. While, however, he took up the relatively advanced position that reason must prepare the way for faith, since otherwise faith has no certitude,⁴ he was in the main dependent on the authority either of Aristotle⁵ or of the Scriptures, though he partly set aside that of the Fathers.⁶ When St. Bernard accused him of Arianism and of heathenism he was expressing personal ill-will rather than criticising. Abailard himself complained that many heresies were current in his time⁷; and as a matter of fact "more intrepid views than his were promulgated without risk by a multitude of less conspicuous masters."⁸ For instance, Bernard Sylvester, (of Chartres), in his cosmology, treated theological

¹ Poole, pp. 141-2.

² "Humanas ac philosophicas rationes requirebant; et plus quæ intelligi quam quæ dici possent efflagitabant" (*Historia calamitatum mearum*, ed. Gréard, p. 36).

³ *Id. ib.*

⁴ Ueberweg, i, 387.

⁵ See cit. from the *Dialectic*, in Ueberweg, i, 391. Cp. Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 111.

⁶ Ueberweg, i, 394-5.

⁷ Hampden, Bampton Lectures, pp. 420-1.

⁸ Poole, p. 175. It is not impossible that, as Sismondi suggests (*Histoire des Français*, ed. 1823, v, 294-296), Abailard was persecuted mainly because of the dangerous anti-papal movement maintained in Italy for fifteen years (1139-1155) by his doctrinally orthodox pupil, Arnold of Brescia. But Hampden (p. 40), agreeing with Guizot (*Hist. de Civ. en Europe; Hist. mod.* Leçon 6), pronounces that "there was no sympathy between the efforts of the Italian Republics to obtain social liberty, and those within the Church to recover personal freedom of thought."

considerations with open disrespect¹; and William of Conches who held a similar tone on physics,² taught, and threatened with punishment, that the Holy Ghost and the Universal Soul were convertible terms.³ This remarkably rational theologian further rejected the literal interpretation of the creation of Eve; in science he adopted the Democritean doctrine of atoms; and in New Testament matters he revived the old rationalistic heresy that the three Persons of the Trinity are simply three aspects of the divine personality—power, wisdom, and will—which doctrine he was duly forced to retract. It is clear from his works that he lived in an atmosphere of controversy, and had to fight all along with the pious irrationalists who “because they know not the forces of nature, in order that they may have all men comrades in their ignorance, suffer not that others should search out anything, and would have us believe like rustics and ask no reason.” “If they perceive any man to be making search, they at once cry out that he is a heretic.” The history of a thousand years of struggle between reason and religion is told in those sentences.

As to William's doctrines and writings see Poole, pp. 124-130, 346-359. His authorship of one treatise is only latterly cleared up. In the work which under the title of *Elementa Philosophiae* is falsely ascribed to Bede, and under the title *De Philosophia Mundi* to Honorius of Autun (see Poole, pp. 340-2, 347 sq.), but which is really the production of William of Conches, there occurs the passage: “What is more pitiable than to say that a thing is, because God is able to do it, and not to show any reason why it is so; just as if God did everything that he is able to do! You talk like one who says that God is able to make a calf out of a log. But *did* he ever do it? Either, then, show a reason why a thing is so, or a purpose wherefore it is so, or else cease to declare it so.” Migne, *Patrolog. Latin.* xc, 1139.

Abailard was not more explicit on concrete issues than this contemporary—who survived him, and studied his writings. If, indeed, as is said, he wrote that “a doctrine is believed not because God has said it but because we

¹ Poole, pp. 117-123, 169.

² Ueberweg, i, 398.

³ Poole, p. 173.

are convinced by reason that it is so,"¹ he went as far on one line as any theologian of his time ; but his main service to freethought seems to have lain in the great stimulus he gave to the practice of reasoning on all topics.² His enemy, St. Bernard, on the contrary, gave an "immense impulse to the growth of a genuinely superstitious spirit among the Latin clergy."³

Dr. Rashdall pronounces Abailard "incomparably the greatest intellect of the Middle Ages ; one of the great minds which mark a period in the world's intellectual history"; and adds that "Abailard (a Christian thinker to the very heart's core, however irredeemable the selfishness and overweening vanity of his youth) was at the same time the representative of the principle of free though reverent inquiry in matters of religion and individual loyalty to truth." (*The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1895, i, 56-7.) If the praise given be intended to exalt Abailard above John Scotus, it seems excessive.

On a survey of Abailard's theological teachings, a modern reader is apt to see the spirit of moral reason most clearly in one set forth in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, to the effect that Jesus was not incarnate to redeem men from damnation, but solely to instruct them by precept and example, and that he suffered and died only to show his charity towards men. The thesis was implicit if not explicit in the teaching of Pelagius ; and for both men it meant the effort to purify their creed from the barbaric taint of the principle of sacrifice. In our own day, revived by such theologians as the English Maurice, it seems likely to gain ground, as an accommodation to the embarrassed moral sense of educated believers. But it is heresy if heresy ever was,

¹ Poole, p. 153.

² Cp. Hardwick, p. 279 ; and see p. 275, *note*, for Bernard's dislike of his demand for clearness : "*Nihil videt per speculum et in aenigmate, sed facie ad faciem omnia intuetur.*"

³ Poole, p. 161. Cp. Dr. Hastings Rashdall on the "pious scurrility" of Bernard. *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1895, i, 57, *note*. Contrast the singularly laudatory account of St. Bernard given by two contemporary Positivists, Mr. Cotter Morison in his *Life and Times of St. Bernard*, and Mr. F. Harrison in his essay on that work in his *Choice of Books*. The subject is discussed in the present writer's paper on "The Ethics of Propaganda" in *Essays in Ethics*.

besides being a blow at the heart of Catholic sacerdotalism; and Abailard on condemnation retracted it as he did his other Pelagian errors. Retractation, however, is publication; and to have been sentenced to retract such teaching in the twelfth century is to leave on posterity an impression of moral originality perhaps as important as the fame of a metaphysician. In any case, it is a careful judge who thus finally estimates him: "When he is often designated as the rationalist among the schoolmen, he deserves the title not only on account of the doctrine of the Trinity, which approaches Sabellianism in spite of all his polemics against it, and not only on account of his critical attempts, but also on account of his ethics, in which he actually completely agrees in the principal point with many modern rationalists."¹ And it is latterly his singular fate to be valued at once by many sympathetic Catholics, who hold him finally vindicated alike in life and doctrine, and by many freethinkers.

How far the great vibration set up in Europe by his personal magnetism and his personal record may have made for rational culture, it is impossible to estimate; but some consequence there must have been. John of Salisbury was one of Abailard's disciples and admirers; and as we saw, he not only noted skepticism in others but indicated an infusion of it in his own mind—enough to earn for him from a modern historian the praise of being a sincere skeptic, as against those false skeptics who put forward universal doubt as a stalking horse for their mysticism.² But he was certainly not a universal skeptic³; and his denunciation of doubt as to the goodness and power of God⁴ sounds orthodox enough. What he gained from Abailard was a concern for earnest dialectic.

The worst side of scholasticism at all times was that it

¹ Erdmann, *History of Philosophy*, Eng. trans. 3rd ed. i, 325.

² Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i, 534-6.

³ *Id.* citing the *Polycraticus*, l. vii. c. 2.

⁴ *Polycraticus*, l. vii c. 7.

was more often than not a mere logical expatiation *in vacuo*; this partly for sheer lack of real knowledge. John of Salisbury probably did not do injustice to the habit of verbiage it developed'; and the pupils of Abailard seem to have expressed themselves strongly to him concerning the wordy emptiness of most of what passed current as philosophic discourse; speaking of the teachers as blind leaders of the blind.² One version of the legend against Simon of Tournay is to the effect that after demonstrating by the most skilful arguments the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, he went on to say, as soon as the applause of his audience had subsided, that if he had been evilly minded he could refute the doctrine by yet better arguments.³ Heresy apart, this species of dialectical insincerity infected the whole life of the schools, even the higher spirits going about their work with a certain amount of mere logical ceremony.

§ 7.

Even in the schools, however, over and above the influence of the more original teachers, there rises at the close of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth some measure of a new life, introduced into philosophy through the communication of Aristotle to the western world by the Saracens, largely through the mediation of the Jews.⁴ The latter, in their free life under the earlier Moorish toleration, had developed something in the nature of a school of philosophy, in which the Judaic Platonism set up by Philo of Alexandria in the first century was blended with the Aristotelianism of the Arabs. As early as the eighth and ninth centuries, anti-Talmudic (the Karaïtes) and pro-

¹ Cp. Poole, pp. 220-2; the extracts of Hampden, pp. 438-443; and the summing up of Haureau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i (1870), 357.

² *Historia calamitatum*, as cited. Cp. p. 10 for Abailard's own opinion of Anselm of Laon, whom he compares to a leafy but fruitless tree.

³ Matthew Paris, sub. ann. 1201.

⁴ Ueberweg, i, 419, 430; Hampden, p. 443 sq. Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, 2e ptie. c. i, p. 173 sq.

Talmudic parties professed alike to appeal to reason¹; and in the twelfth century the mere production of the *Guide of the Perplexed* by the celebrated Moses Maimonides (1130–1205)² tells of a good deal of practical rationalism (of the kind that reduced miracle stories to allegories), of which, however, there is little direct literary result, save of a theosophic kind.³ Levi ben Gershom (1286–1344), commonly regarded as the greatest successor of Maimonides, is like him guardedly rationalistic in his commentaries on the Scriptures.⁴ But the doctrine which makes Aristotle a practical support to rationalism, and which was adopted not only by Averroës but by the Motazilites of Islam—the eternity of matter—was rejected by Maimonides (as by nearly all other Jewish teachers, with the partial exception of Levi ben Gershom),⁵ on Biblical grounds; though his attempts to rationalise Biblical doctrine and minimise miracles made him odious to the orthodox Jews, some of whom, in France, did not scruple to call in the aid of the Christian inquisition against his partisans.⁶ The long struggle between the Maimonists and the orthodox is described as ending in the “triumph of peripatetism” or Averroïsm in the synagogue⁷; but Averroïsm as modified by Maimonides is only a partial accommodation of Scripture to common sense. It would appear, in fact, that Jewish thought in the Saracen world retrograded as did that of the Saracens themselves; for we find Maimonides exclaiming over the apparent disbelief in *creatio ex nihilo* in the “Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer the Great,” believed by him to be ancient, but now known to be a product of the eighth century.⁸ The pantheistic teaching of Solomon

¹ Ueberweg, i, 418. The Karaïtes may be described as Jewish Protestants or Puritans. Cp. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, pp. 252–4.

² Schechter (as cited, pp. 197, 417) gives two sets of dates, the second being 1135–1204.

³ For a good survey of the medieval Hebrew thought in general, see Joel, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie*, 1876; and as to Maimonides see A. Franck's *Études Orientales*, 1861; and Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 177–182.

⁴ Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, pp. 422–3.

⁵ *Id.* p. 208.

⁶ Ueberweg, i, 428; Schechter, p. 424.

⁷ Renan, *Averroës*, p. 183.

⁸ Schechter, pp. 83–85.

ben Gebirol or Ibn Gebirol, better known as Avicbron, who in point of time preceded the Arab Avempace, and who later acquired much Christian authority, was orthodox on the side of the creation dogma even when many Jews were on that head rationalistic.¹ The high-water mark, among the Jews, of the critical rationalism of the time, is the perception by Aben or Ibn Ezra (1119-1174) that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses—a discovery which gave Spinoza his cue five hundred years later; but Ibn Ezra, *liberioris ingenii vir*, as Spinoza pronounced him, had to express himself darkly.²

Thus the Jewish influence on Christian thought in the Middle Ages was chiefly metaphysical, carrying on Greek and Arab impulses; and to call the Jewish people, as does Renan, "the principal representative of rationalism during the second half of the Middle Age" is to make too much of the academic aspects of freethinking. On the side of popular theology it is difficult to believe that they had much Unitarian influence; though Joinville in his *Life of Saint Louis* tells how, in a debate between churchmen and Jews at the monastery of Cluny, a certain knight saw fit to break the head of one of the Jews with his staff for denying the divinity of Jesus, giving as his reason that many good Christians, listening to the Jewish arguments, were in a fair way to go home unbelievers. It was in this case that the sainted king laid down the principle that when a layman heard anyone blaspheme the Christian creed his proper course was not to argue, but to run the blasphemer through with his sword.³ Such admitted inability on the part of the laity to reason on their faith, however, was more likely to accompany a double degree of orthodoxy than to make for doubt; and the clerical debating at the Abbey of Cluny, despite the honourable attitude of the Abbot, who condemned the knight's outrage, was probably a muster of foregone conclusions.

¹ Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 100, 175.

² Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, c. 8, *ad init.*

³ *Mémoires de Joinville*, ed. 1871, ii, 16.

For a time, indeed, in the energetic intellectual life of northern France the spirit of freethought went far and deep. After the great stimulus given in Abailard's day to all discussion, we find another Breton teacher, AMAURY or Amalrich of Bène or Bena (end of twelfth century) and his pupil David of Dinant, partly under the earlier Arab influence,¹ partly under that of John the Scot,² teaching a pronounced pantheism, akin to that noted as flourishing later among the Brethren of the Free Spirit³ and some of the Franciscan Fraticelli. Such a movement, involving disregard for the sacraments and ceremonies of the church, was soon recognised as a dangerous heresy, and dealt with accordingly. The church caused Amaury to abjure his teachings; and after his death, finding his party still growing, dug up and burned his bones. At the same time (1209) a number of his followers were burned alive; David of Dinant had to fly for his life⁴; and inasmuch as the new heresy had begun to make much of Aristotle, presumably as interpreted by Averroës, a Council held at Paris vetoed for the university the study alike of the pagan master and his commentators, interdicting first the *Physics* and soon after the *Metaphysics*.⁵ This veto held until 1237, when the school which adapted the lore of Aristotle to Christian purposes began to carry the day.

The heretical Aristotelianism and the orthodox system which was to overpower it were alike radiated from the south, where the Arab influence spread early and widely. There, as we shall see, the long duel between the Emperor Frederick II and the papacy made a special

¹ Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 222-4.

² Huber, *Johannes Scotus Erigena*, p. 435. Copies of John's writings were found in the hands of the sectaries of Amalrich and David; and in 1226 the writings in question were condemned and burnt accordingly. Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i (1872), 175.

³ Ueberweg, i, 388, 431; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 112-114; Renan, p. 223; Hahn, *Geschichte der Ketzer im Mittelalter*, 1845-50, iii, 176-192.

⁴ Mosheim, 13 Cent. Pt. ii, ch. v, § 12.

⁵ Poole, p. 225; Ueberweg, i, 431.

opportunity for speculative freethought; and though this was far from meaning at all times practical enmity to Christian doctrine,¹ that was not absent. It is clear that before Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) a Naturalist and Averroïst view of the universe had been much discussed, since he makes the remark that “God is by some called *Natura naturans*”²—Nature at work; an idea fundamental alike to pantheism and to scientific naturalism. And throughout his great work—a marvel of mental gymnastic which better than almost any other writing redeems medieval orthodoxy from the charge of mere ineptitude—Thomas indicates his acquaintance with unorthodox thought. In particular he seems to owe the form of his work as well as the subject-matter of much of his argument to Averroës.³ Born within the sphere of the Saracen-Sicilian influence, and of high rank, he must have met with what rationalism there was, and he always presupposes it.⁴ “He is nearly as consummate a skeptic, almost atheist, as he is a divine and theologian,” says one modern ecclesiastical dignitary⁵; and an orthodox apologist⁶ more severely complains that “Aquinas presented.....so many doubts on the deepest points.....so many plausible reasons for unbelief.....that his works have probably suggested most of the sceptical opinions which were adopted by others who were trained in the study of them.....He has done more than most men to put the faith of his fellow-Christians in peril.” Of course he rejects Averroïsm. Yet he, like his antagonist Duns Scotus, inevitably

¹ The description by Mr. Lecky (*Rationalism in Europe*, ed. 1887, i, 48) of Averroïsm and the Arab philosophy in general as a “stern and uncompromising infidelity” is hopelessly astray.

² *Summa Theologica*, Prima Secundae, Quæst. LXXXV, Art. 6. Compare Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, i, 189, for a trace of the idea of *natura naturans* in John Scotus and Heiric, in the ninth century.

³ Renan, p. 236 sq.

⁴ Cp. Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, ii, 130.

⁵ Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 133.

⁶ Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, Pt. i, pp. 38–39. Compare Rashdall, *Universities in the Middle Ages*, i, 264; and Maurice, *Medieval Philosophy*, 2nd ed. pp. 188–190. It is noteworthy that the *Summa* of Thomas was a favourite study of Descartes, who read hardly any other theologian.

gravitates to pantheism when he would rigorously philosophise.¹

What he did for his church was to combine so ingeniously the semblance of Aristotelian method with constant recurrence to the sacred books, as to impose their authority on the life of the schools no less completely than it dominated the minds of the unlearned. Meeting method with method, and showing himself well aware of the lore he circumvented, he built up a system quite as well fitted to be a mere gymnastic of the mind; and he thereby effected the arrest for some three centuries of the method of experimental science which Aristotle had inculcated. He came just in time. Roger Bacon, trained at Paris, was eagerly preaching the scientific gospel; and while he was suffering imprisonment at the hands of his Franciscan superiors for his eminently secular devotion to science, the freer scholars of the university were developing a heresy that outwent his.

Now, however, began to be seen once for all the impossibility of rational freedom in or under a church which depended for its revenue on the dogmatic exploitation of popular credulity. For a time the Aristotelian influence, as had been seen by the churchmen who had first sought to destroy it,² tended to be Averroïst and rationalist.³ In 1269, however, there begins a determined campaign, led by the bishop of Paris, against the current Averroïst doctrines, notably the propositions "that the world is eternal"; "that there never was a first man"; "that the intellect of man is one"; "that the mind, which is the form of man, constituting him such, perishes with the body"; "that the acts of men are not governed by divine providence"; "that God cannot give immortality or incorruptibility to a corruptible or mortal thing."⁴ On such

¹ Cp. Milman, ix, 143.

² See the comments of Giraldus Cambrensis in the proem to his *Speculum Ecclesiæ*, Brewer's ed. in Rolls Series, i, 9; and pref. pp. xii-xiii.

³ Cp. Renan, *Averroës*, p. 267, as to the polemic of William of Auvergne.

⁴ Renan, pp. 567-8.

doctrines the bishop and his coadjutors naturally passed an anathema (1270); and at this period it was that Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas wrote their treatises against Averroism.¹

Still the freethinkers held out, and though in 1271 official commands were given that the discussion of such matters in the university should cease, another process of condemnation was carried out in 1277. This time the list of propositions denounced includes the following: "that the natural philosopher as such must deny the creation of the world, because he proceeds upon natural causes and reasons; while the believer (*fidelis*) may deny the eternity of the world, because he argues from supernatural causes"; "that creation is not possible, although the contrary is to be held according to faith"; "that a future resurrection is not to be believed by the philosopher, because it cannot be investigated by reason"; "that the teachings of the theologians are founded on fables"; "that there are fables and falsities in the Christian religion as in others"; "that nothing more can be known, on account of theology"; "that the Christian law prevents from learning"²; "that God is not triune and one, for trinity is incompatible with perfect simplicity"; "that ecstatic states and visions take place naturally, and only so." Such vital unbelief could have only one fate: it was reduced to silence by a papal Bull,³ administered by the orthodox majority; and the memory of the massacres of the year 1209, and of the awful crusade against the Albigenses, served to cow the thinkers of the schools into an outward conformity.

Henceforward, orthodox Aristotelianism, placed on a canonical footing in the theological system of Thomas Aquinas, ruled the universities; and scholasticism

¹ Renan, pp. 269-271, and refs.

² Renan, pp. 273-5, and refs.; Ueberweg, i, 460, and refs.; Maywald, *Die Lehre von der zweifachen Wahrheit*, 1871, p. 11; Lange, i, 182 (trans. i, 218).

³ Of John XXI, who had in 1276 condemned the doctrine of a twofold truth.

counts for little in the liberation of European life from either dogma or superstition.¹ The practically progressive forces are to be looked for outside. In the thirteenth century in England we find the Franciscan friars in the school of Robert Grosstête at Oxford discussing the question "Whether there be a God?"² but such a dispute was an academic exercise like another; and in any case the authorities could be trusted to see that it came to nothing. The work of Thomas himself serves to show how a really great power of comprehensive and orderly thought can be turned to the subversion of judgment by accepting the prior dominion of a fixed body of dogma and an arbitrary rule over opinion. And yet, so strong is the principle of ratiocination in his large performance, and so much does it embody of the critical forces of antiquity and of its own day, that while it served the church as a code of orthodoxy its influence can be seen in the skeptical philosophy of Europe as late as Spinoza and Kant. It appears to have been as a result of his argumentation that there became established in the later procedure of the church the doctrine that, while heretics who have once received the faith and lapsed are to be coerced and punished, other unbelievers (as Moslems and Jews) are not. This principle also, it would appear, he derived from the Moslems, as he did their rule that those of the true faith must avoid intimacy with the unbelievers, though believers firm in the faith may dispute with them "when there is greater expectation of the conversion of the infidels than of the subversion of the fidels." And to the rule of non-inquisition into the faith of Jews and Moslems the church professed to adhere while the Inquisition lasted, after having trampled it under foot in spirit by causing the expulsion of the Jews and the Moriscoes from Spain.³

¹ Cp. Gebhart, *Les Origines de la Renaissance*, pp. 29-44. And see above, p. 305.

² Berington, *Lit. Hist. of the Middle Ages*, p. 245. See below, § 4.

³ See the *Summa* of the Inquisitor Bartholomæus Fumus, Venet. 1554, s.v. INFIDELITAS, fol. 261, § 5; and the *Summa* of Thomas, *Secunda Secundae*, Quæst. X, Art. 2.

We shall perhaps best understand the inner life of the schools in the Middle Ages by likening it to that of the universities of our own time, where there is unquestionably much unbelief among teachers and taught, but where the economic and other pressures of the institution suffice to preserve an outward acquiescence. In the Middle Ages it was immeasurably less possible than in our day for the unbeliever to strike out a free course of life and doctrine for himself. If then to-day the scholarly class is in large measure tied to institutions and conformities, much more so was it then. The cloister was almost the sole haven of refuge for studious spirits, and to enjoy the haven they had to accept the discipline and the profession of faith. We may conclude, accordingly, that such works as Abailard's *Sic et Non*, setting forth opposed views of so many doctrines and problems, stood for and made for a great deal of quiet skepticism¹; that the remarkable request of the monks of Bec for a ratiocinative teaching which should meet even extravagant objections, covered a good deal of resigned unfaith; and that in the Franciscan schools at Oxford the disputants were not all at heart orthodox. Indeed, the very existence of the doctrine of a "twofold truth"—one truth for religion and another for philosophy—was from the outset a witness for unbelief. But the unwritten word died, the *litera scripta* being solely those of faith, and liberation had to come, ages later, from without. Even when a bold saying won general currency—as that latterly ascribed, no doubt falsely, to King Alfonso the Wise of Castile, that "if he had been of God's council when he made the world he could have advised him better"—it did but crystallise skepticism in a jest, and supply the enemy with a text against impiety.

¹ It is sometimes described as a formidable product of doubt; and again by M. de Rémusat as "consecrated to controversy rather than to skepticism." Cp. Pearson, *Hist. of England in the Early and Middle Ages*, 1867, i, 609. The view in the text seems the just mean. Cp. Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, i, 57. The Rev. A. S. Farrar pronounces that "the critical independence of Nominalism, in a mind like that of Abailard, represents the destructive action of freethought, partly as early Protestantism, partly as skepticism" (*Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, p. 12).

All the while, the church was forging new and more murderous weapons against reason. It is one of her infamies to have revived the use in Christendom of the ancient practice of judicial torture, and this expressly for the suppression of heresy. The later European practice dates from the Bull of Innocent IV, *Ad extirpanda*, dated 1252. At first a veto was put on its administration by clerical hands; but in 1256 Alexander IV authorised the inquisitors and their associates to absolve one another for such acts. By the beginning of the fourteenth century torture was in use not only in the tribunals of the Inquisition but in the ordinary ecclesiastical courts, whence it gradually entered into the courts of lay justice.¹ It is impossible to estimate the injury thus wrought at once to culture and to civilisation, at the hands of the power which claimed specially to promote both.²

¹ Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, i, 421-2, 556-8, 575; U. Burke, *Hist. of Spain*, Hume's ed. 1900, ii, 351-2. For a detailed description of the methods of ecclesiastical torture, Burke refers to the treatise *De Catholicis Institutionibus*, by Simancas, Bishop of Beja, Rome, 1575, tit. lxv, *De Tormentis*, p. 491 sq.

² Torture was inflicted on witnesses in England in 1311, by special inquisitors, under the mandate of Clement V, in defiance of English law; and under Edward II it was used in England as elsewhere against the Templars.

CHAPTER X.

FREETHOUGHT IN THE RENAISSANCE

§ 1. *The Italian Evolution.*

WHAT is called the Renaissance was, broadly speaking, an evolution of the culture forces seen at work in the later "Middle Ages," reinforced by the recovery of classic literature; and we shall have to revert at several points of our survey to what we have been considering as "medieval" in order to perceive the "new birth." The term is inconveniently vague, and is made to cover different periods, sometimes extending from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, sometimes signifying only the fifteenth.¹ It seems reasonable to apply it, as regards Italy, to the period in which southern culture began to outgo that of France, and kept its lead—that is, from the thirteenth century to the time of the Counter-Reformation. That is a comparatively distinct sociological era.

Renascent Italy is, after ancient Greece, the great historical illustration of the sociological law that the higher civilisations arise through the passing-on of seeds of culture from older to newer societies, under conditions that specially foster them and give them freer growth. The straitened and archaic Byzantine art, unprogressive in the hidebound life of the Eastern Empire, developed in the free and striving Italian communities till it paralleled the sculpture of ancient Greece; and it is to be said for the church that, however she might stifle rational thought, she economically elicited the arts of painting and architecture (statuary being tabooed as too

¹ J. A. Symonds writes that in the age of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio "what we call the Renaissance had not yet arrived" (*Renaissance in Italy: Age of the Despots*, ed. 1897, p. 9).

much associated with pagan worships), even as Greek religion had promoted architecture and sculpture. By force, however, of the tendency of the arts to keep religion anthropomorphic where deeper culture is lacking, popular belief in Renaissance Italy was substantially on a par with that of polytheistic Greece.

Before the general recovery of ancient literature, the main motives to rationalism, apart from the tendency of the Aristotelian philosophy to set up doubts about creation and Providence and a future state, were (1) the spectacle of the competing creed of Islam,¹ made known to the Italians first by intercourse with the Moors, later by the Crusades; and further and more fully by the Saracenised culture of Sicily and commercial intercourse with the east; (2) the spectacle of the strife of creeds within Christendom²; and (3) the spectacle of the worldliness and moral insincerity of the bulk of the clergy. It is in that atmosphere that the Renaissance begins; and it may be said that freethought stood veiled beside its cradle. Clear traces of rational unbelief, albeit not more pronounced than some we have noted in the twelfth, appear in the thirteenth century, when the Emperor Frederick II had the repute of being an infidel in the double sense of being semi-Moslem³ and semi-atheist. By Pope Gregory IX he was openly charged, in a furious afterthought,⁴ with saying that the world had been deceived by three impostors (*baratores*)—Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed; also with putting Jesus much below the other two, and with delighting to call himself the forerunner of Antichrist.

¹ Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, 3e édit. pp. 280-2, 295; Lewes, *History of Philosophy*, 4th ed. ii, 67; Reuter, *Geschichte der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 139-141. It is noteworthy that the Troubadour, Austore d'Orlac, in cursing the crusades and the clergy who promoted them, suggests that the Christians should turn Moslems, seeing that God is on the side of the unbelievers (Gieseler, *Per. III, Div. III, § 58, note 1*).

² Cp. Burckhardt, *Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, Eng. trans. ed. 1892, pp. 490, 492.

³ The Moslems were inclined to regard him as of their creed "because educated in Sicily." Cantù, *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, 1865, i, 66.

⁴ See Gieseler, as cited below; and Reid's *Mosheim*, p. 437, *note*.

The Pope's letter, dated July 1, 1239, is given by Matthew Paris (extracts in Gieseler, vol. iii, § 55), and in Labbe's *Concilia*, t. xiii, col. 1157. Cp. the other references given by Renan, *Averroès*, 3e édit. pp. 296-7. As Voltaire remarks (*Essai sur les Mœurs*, ch. lii), the Pope's statement is the basis for the old belief that Frederick had written a treatise dealing with Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed as *The Three Impostors*. The story is certainly a myth; and probably no such book existed in his century. Cp. Maclaine's note to Mosheim, 13 Cent., Pt. I, *end*; Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 280-1, 295. The authorship of such a book has nevertheless been ascribed by Catholic writers successively to Averroès, Simon of Tournay, Frederick, his Minister, Pierre des Vignes, Arnaldo de Villanueva, Boccaccio, Poggio, Pietro Aretino, Machiavelli, Symphorien, Champier, Pomponazzi, Cardan, Erasmus, Ochinus, Servetus, Postel, Campanella, Muret, Giordano Bruno, Dolet, Hobbes, Spinoza, and Vanini (cp. Lea, *Hist. of the Inquis.* iii, 560); and the seventeenth-century apologist Mersenne professed to have seen it in Arabic (*Id.* p. 297). A treatise entitled *De Imposturis Religionum* came to light in MS. in 1716; and one entitled *De Tribus Impostoribus*, written sometime between the middle of the sixteenth and the middle of the eighteenth century, appears to have been printed at Vienna in 1753. This has been reprinted frequently, and translated into French, German, and Italian. On the whole subject see the note of R. C. Christie (reprinted from *Notes and Queries*) in his *Selected Essays and Papers*, 1902, pp. 309-315; and the full discussion in Reuter's *Geschichte der religiösen Aufklärung*, ii, 251-296.

He was in reality superstitious enough; he worshipped relics; and he was nearly as merciless as the Popes to rebellious heretics and Manicheans¹; his cruelty proceeding, seemingly, on the belief that insubordination to the emperor was sure to follow intellectual as distinguished from political revolt against the Church. He was absolutely tolerant to Jews and Moslems,² and had trusted Moslem counsellors, thereby specially evoking the wrath of the church. Greatly concerned to acquire the lore of the Arabs,³ he gave his favour and protection to Michael Scotus, the first translator of

¹ Milman, *Latin Christianity*, B. x, ch. 3 (4th ed. vi, 150); Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, i, 221.

² Milman, vi, 150, 158.

³ Renan, *Averroès*, p. 289.

portions of Averroës into Latin,¹ and presumptively himself a heretic of the Averroïst stamp; whence the legend of his wizardry, adopted by Dante.² Thus the doubting and persecuting emperor assisted at the birth of the philosophic movement which for centuries was most closely associated with unbelief in Christendom. For the rest, he is recorded to have ridiculed the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, the viaticum, and other dogmas, "as being repugnant to reason and to nature"³; and his general hostility to the Pope would tend to make him a bad churchman. Indeed the testimonies, both Christian and Moslem, as to his freethinking are too clear to be set aside.⁴ Certainly no monarch of that or any age was more eagerly interested in every form of culture, or did more, on tyrannous lines, to promote it⁵; and to him rather than to Simon de Montfort Europe owes the admission of representatives of cities to Parliaments.⁶ Of his son Manfred it is recorded that he was a thorough Epicurean, believing neither in God nor the saints.⁷ But positive unbelief in a future state, mockery of the Christian religion, and even denial of deity—usually in private, and never in writing—are frequently complained of by the clerical writers of the time in France and Italy,⁸ while in Spain Alfonso the Wise,

¹ Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 205–210. Michael Scotus may have been, like John Scotus, an Irishman, but his refusal to accept the archbishopric of Cashel, on the ground that he did not know the native language, makes this doubtful. The identification of him with a Scottish knight, Sir Michael Scott, still persisted in by some scholars on the strength of Sir Walter Scott's hasty note to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, is destitute of probability. See the Rev. J. Wood Brown's *Inquiry into the Life and Legend of Michael Scot*, 1897, pp. 160–1, 175–6.

² *Inferno*, xx, 515–517.

³ Cantù, *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, i, 65–66; the Pope's letter, as cited; Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 287–291, 296.

⁴ See the verdict of Gieseler, Eng. trans. iii (1853), p. 103, *note*.

⁵ Milman, vi, 158–9.

⁶ *Id.* p. 154. Cp. the author's *Introd. to English Politics*, 1900, p. 405.

⁷ G. Villani, *Istorie fiorentine*, vi, 46.

⁸ Mosheim, 13 Cent., Pt. i, ch. ii, § 2, citing in particular Moneta's *Summa contra Catharos et Valdenses*, lib. V, cc. 4, 11, 15; Tempier (bishop of Paris), *Indiculum Errorum* (1272) in the *Bibliotheca Patrum Maxima*, t. xxv; Bulæus, *Hist. Acad. Paris*, iii, 433—as to the Averroïsts at Paris, described above, p. 339. Cp. Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 230–1, citing William of Auvergne, and pp. 283, 285; Ozanam, *Dante*, 6e édit. pp. 86,

about 1260, speaks of a common unbelief in immortality, alike as to heaven and hell, and the Council of Tarragona in 1291 decrees punishments against such unbelievers.¹ In Italy, not unnaturally, they were most commonly found among the Ghibelline or imperial party, the opponents of the Papacy, despite imperial orthodoxy. "Incredulity, affected or real, was for the oppressed Ghibellines a way among others of distinguishing themselves from the Guelph oppressors."²

The commonest form of rationalistic heresy seems to have been unbelief in immortality. Thus Dante in the *Inferno* estimates that among the heretics there are more than a thousand followers of Epicurus, "who make the soul die with the body,"³ specifying among them the Emperor Frederick II, a cardinal,⁴ the Ghibelline noble Farinata degli Uberti, and the Guelph Cavalcante Cavalcanti.⁵ He was thinking, as usual, of the men of his own age; but, as we have seen, this particular heresy had existed in previous centuries, having indeed probably never disappeared from Italy. Other passages in Dante's works⁶ show, in any case, that it was much discussed in his time⁷; and it is noteworthy that, so far as open avowal went, Italian freethought had got no further two hundred years later. In the period before

101, 111-112; Gebhart, *Les Origines de la Renaissance en Italie*, pp. 79-81; Lange, i, 182 (trans. i, 218); Sharon Turner, *Hist. of England during the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. v, 136-8.

¹ Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, iii, 560-1.

² Perrens, *La civilisation florentine du 13e au 16e siècle*, 1892, p. 101. And see above, p. 305.

³ *Inferno*, Canto x, 14-15, 118.

⁴ Ottavio Ubaldini, d. 1273, of whom the commentators tell that he said that if there were such a thing as a soul he had lost his for the cause of the Ghibellines.

⁵ As to whom see Renan, *Averroès*, p. 285, note; Gebhart, *Renaissance*, p. 81. His son Guido, "the first friend and the companion of all the youth of Dante," was reputed an atheist (*Decameron*, vi, 9). Cp. Cesare Balbo, *Vita di Dante*, ed. 1853, pp. 48-49. But see Owen, *Skeptics of the Ital. Renais.* p. 138, note.

⁶ In the *Convito*, ii, 9, he writes that, "among all the bestialities, that is the most foolish, the most vile, the most damnable, which believes no other life to be after this life." Another passage (iv, 5) heaps curses on the "most foolish and vile beasts.....who presume to speak against our Faith."

⁷ Cp. Ozanam, *Dante*, 6e édit. pp. 111-112, as to anti-Christian movements.

the Papacy had thoroughly established the Inquisition, and diplomacy supervened on the tempestuous strifes of the great factions, there was a certain hardihood of speech on all subjects, which tended to disappear alongside of even a more searching unbelief.

“Le 16e siècle n’a eu aucune mauvaise pensée que le 13e n’ait eue avant lui” (Renan, *Averroès*, p. 231). Renan, however, seems astray in stating that “Le Poème de *la Descente de Saint Paul aux enfers* parle avec terreur d’une société secrète qui avait juré la destruction de Christianisme” (*Id.* p. 284). The poem simply describes the various tortures of sinners in hell, and mentions in their turn those who “en terre, à sainte Iglise firent guerre,” and in death “Verbe Deu refusouent”; also those “Ki ne croient que Deu fust nez (né), ne que Sainte Marie l’eust portez, ne que por le peuple vousist (voulait) mourir, ne que peine deignast soffrir.” See the text as given by Ozanam, *Dante*, ed. 6ième, Ptie. iv—the version cited by Renan.

So, with regard to the belief in magic, there was no general advance in the later Renaissance on the skepticism of Pietro of Abano, a famous Paduan physician and Averroïst, who died, at the age of 80, in 1305. He appears to have denied alike magic and miracles, though he held fast by astrology, and ascribed the rise and progress of all religions to the influence of the stars. Himself accused of magic, he escaped violent death by dying naturally before his trial was ended; and the Inquisition burned either his body or his image.¹ After him, superstition seems to have gone step for step with skepticism.

Dante’s own poetic genius, indeed, did much to arrest intellectual evolution in Italy on the side of belief. Before his time, as we have seen, the trouvères of northern France and the Goliards of the south had handled hell in a spirit of burlesque; and his own teacher, Brunetto Latini, had framed a poetic allegory, *Il Tesoretto*, in which Nature figures as the universal power, behind which the God-idea disappeared.² But

¹ Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 83, note; Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 326-7; Cantù, *Gli Eretici d’Italia*, i, 177, and note 13 on p. 196.

² Cp. Labitte, *La Divine Comédie avant Dante*, as cited, p. 139.

Dante's tremendous vision ultimately effaced all others of the kind; and his final intellectual predominance in virtue of mere imaginative art is at once the great characteristic and the great anomaly of the Renaissance. Happily the inseparable malignity of his pietism was in large part superseded by a sunnier spirit;¹ but his personality and his poetry helped to hold the balance of authority on the side of faith.² Within a few years of his death there was burned at Florence (1327) one of the most daring heretics of the early Renaissance, CECCO STABILI D'ASCOLI, a professor of philosophy and astrology at Bologna, who is recorded to have had some intimacy with Dante, and to have been one of his detractors.³ Cecco has been described as "representing natural science, against the Christian science of Dante,"⁴ and though his science was primitive, the summing-up is not unwarranted. Combining strong anti-Christian feeling with the universal belief in astrology, he had declared that Jesus lived as a sluggard (*come un poltrone*) with his disciples, and died on the cross, under the compulsion of his star.⁵ In view of the blasphemer's fate, such audacity was not often repeated.

As against Dante, the great literary influence for tolerance and liberalism if not rationalism of thought was BOCCACCIO (1313-1375), whose *Decameron*⁶ reflects every lighter aspect of the Renaissance—its levity, its

¹ Michelet argues that Italy was "anti-Dantesque" in the Renaissance (*Hist. de France*, vii, Introd. § 9 and App.), but he exaggerates the common disregard of the *Commedia*.

² As to an element of doubt, even in Dante, concerning Divine government, see Burckhardt, p. 497. But the attempt made by some critics to show that the "sins" to which Dante confessed had been intellectual—i.e., heresies—falls to the ground. See Döllinger, *Studies in European History*, Eng. trans. 1890, pp. 87-90; and cp. Cantù, *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, i, 144 sq. on the whole question.

³ Cesare Balbo, *Vita di Dante*, ed. 1853, pp. 416-417, 433.

⁴ Cesare Cantù, *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, i, 153. Cantù gives an account of the trial process.

⁵ G. Villani, x, 39. It is to be noted that the horoscope of Jesus was cast by several professed believers, as Albertus Magnus and Pierre d'Ailli, Cardinal and Bishop of Cambrai, as well as by Cardan. See Bayle, art. CARDAN, note Q; and cp. Renan, *Averroès*, p. 326.

⁶ Cp. Owen, pp. 128, 135-142; Hallam, *Lit. Hist.* i, 141-2; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, B. xiv, c. 5, *end*.

licence, its humour, its anti-clericalism, its incipient tolerance, its irreverence, its partial freethinking, as well as its exuberance in the joy of living. On the side of anti-clericalism, the key-note is struck so strongly and so defiantly in some of the opening tales that the toleration of the book by the papal authorities can be accounted for only by their appreciation of the humour of the stories therein told against them, as that¹ of the Jew who, after seeing the utter corruption of the clergy at Rome, turned Christian on the score that only by divine support could such a system survive. No Protestant ever passed a more scathing aspersion on the whole body of the curia than is thus set in the forefront of the *Decameron*. Still more deeply significant of innovating thought, however, is the famous story of *The Three Rings*,² embodied later by Lessing in his *Nathan the Wise* as an apologue of tolerance. Such a story, introduced with whatever parade of orthodox faith, could not but make for rational skepticism, summarising as it does the whole effect of the inevitable comparison of the rival creeds made by the men of Italy and those of the east in their intercourse. The story itself, centring on Saladin, is of eastern origin,³ and so tells of even more freethinking than meets the eye in the history of Islam.⁴ It is noteworthy that the Rabbi Simeon Duran (1360–1444), who follows on this period, appears to be the first Jewish teacher to plead for mutual toleration among the conflicting schools of his race.⁵

Current in Italy before Boccaccio, the tale had been improved from one Italian hand to another⁶; and the

¹ *Decam.* Gior. i, nov. 2.

² Gior. i, nov. 3.

³ Dr. Marcus Landau, *Die Quellen des Dekameron*, 2te Aufl. 1884, p. 182.

⁴ The story is recorded to have been current among the Motecallemin—a party kindred to the Motazilites—in Bagdad. Renan, *Averroès*, p. 293, citing Dozy. Renan thinks it may have been of Jewish origin. *Id.* p. 294, note.

⁵ Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, pp. 207–8.

⁶ It is found some time before Boccaccio in the *Cento Novelle antiche* (No. 72 or 73) in a simpler form; but Landau (p. 183) thinks Boccaccio's immediate source was the version of Busone da Gubbio (b. 1280), who had improved on the version in the *Cento Novelle*, while Boccaccio in turn

main credit for its full development is Boccaccio's.¹ Though the church never officially attempted to suppress the book—leaving it to Savonarola to destroy as far as possible the first edition—the more serious clergy naturally resented its hostility, first denouncing it, then seeking to expurgate all the anti-clerical passages²; and the personal pressure brought to bear upon Boccaccio had the effect of dispiriting and puritanising him; so that the *Decameron* finally wrought its effect in its author's despite.³ So far as we can divine the deeper influence of such a work on Renaissance thought, it may reasonably be supposed to have tended, like that of Averroism, towards Unitarianism or Deism, inasmuch as a simple belief in deity is all that is normally implied in its language on religious matters. On that view it bore its full intellectual fruit only in the two succeeding centuries, when Deism and Unitarianism alike grew up in Italy, apparently from non-scholastic roots.

It is an interesting problem how far the vast calamity of the Black Death (1348–9) told either for skepticism or for superstition in this age. In Boccaccio's immortal book we see a few refined Florentines who flee the pest giving themselves up to sheer amusement; but there is also mention of many who had taken to wild debauchery, and there are many evidences as to wild outbreaks of desperate licence all over Europe.⁴ On the other hand many were driven by fear to religious practices⁵; and in

improved on him by treating the Jew more tolerantly. Bartoli (*I Precursori del Boccaccio*, 1876, pp. 26–28) disputes any immediate debt to Busone; as does Mr. Owen, *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, p. 29, note.

¹ Burckhardt (*Renaissance in Italy*, p. 493, note) points out that Boccaccio is the first to name the Christian religion, his Italian predecessors avoiding the idea; and that in one eastern version the story is used polemically against the Christians.

² Owen, p. 142, and refs.

³ *Id.* pp. 143–5. He was even so far terrorised by the menaces of a monk (who appeared to him to have occult knowledge of some of his secrets) as to propose to give up his classical studies; and would have done so but for Petrarch's dissuasion. Petrarch's letter (*Epist. Senil.* i, 5) is translated (Lett. xii) by M. Develay, *Lettres de Pétrarque à Boccace*.

⁴ Dr. F. A. Gasquet, *The Great Pestilence*, 1893, pp. 28, 32, 37, and refs.

⁵ *Id.* pp. 11, 41.

the immense destruction of life the church acquired much new wealth. At the same time the multitudes of priests who died¹ had as a rule to be replaced by ill-trained persons, where the problem was not solved by creating pluralities, the result being a general falling-off in the culture and the authority of the clergy.² But there seems to have been little or no growth of such questioning as came later from the previously optimistic Voltaire after the earthquake of Lisbon ; and the total effect of the immense reduction of population all over Europe seems to have been a lowering of the whole of the activities of life. Certainly the students of Paris in 1376 were surprisingly freethinking on scriptural points³ ; but there is nothing to show that the great pestilence had set up any new movement of ethical thought. In some ways it grievously deepened bigotry, as in regard to the Jews, who were in many regions madly impeached as having caused the plague by poisoning the wells, and massacred in large numbers.

Side by side with Boccaccio, his friend PETRARCH (1304-1374), who with him completes the great literary trio of the early Italian Renaissance, belongs to free-thought in that he too, with less aggressiveness but also without recoil, stood for independent culture and a rational habit of mind as against the dogmatics and tyrannies of the church.⁴ He was in the main a practical humanist, not in accord with the verbalising scholastic philosophy of his time, and disposed to find his intellectual guide in the sceptical yet conservative Cicero. The scholastics had become as fanatical for Aristotle or Averroës as the churchmen were for their dogmas⁵ ; and Petrarch made for mental freedom by resisting all dogmatisms alike.⁶ The general liberality of his attitude has earned him the

¹ Probably 25,000 in England alone, including monks. *Id.* p. 204.

² *Id.* pp. 205-8, 213, 216.

³ Below, § 5.

⁴ As to his anti-clericalism, cp. Gebhart, *Origines de la Renaissance*, p. 71, and ref. ; Owen, p. 113.

⁵ Cp. Rashdall, *Universities in the Middle Ages*, i, 264.

⁶ See the exposition of Mr. Owen, pp. 109-128, and refs. on p. 113.

titles of "the first modern man"¹ and "the founder of modern criticism"²—both somewhat high-pitched.³ He represented in reality the sobering and clarifying influence of the revived classic culture on the fanaticisms developed in the Middle Ages; and when he argued for the rule of reason in all things⁴ it was not that he was a deeply searching rationalist, but that he was spontaneously averse to all the extremes of thought around him, and was concerned to discredit them. For himself, having little speculative power, he was disposed to fall back on a simple and tolerant Christianity. Thus he is quite unsympathetic in his references to those scholars of his day who privately indicated their unbelief. Knowing nothing of the teaching of Averroës, he speaks of him, on the strength of Christian fictions, as "that mad dog who, moved by an execrable rage, barks against his Lord Christ and the Catholic faith."⁵ Apart from such conventional *odium theologicum*, his judgment, like his literary art, was clear and restrained; opening no new vistas, but bringing a steady and placid light to bear on its chosen sphere.

Between such humanistic influences and that of more systematic and scholastic thought, Italy in that age was the chief source of practical criticism of Christian dogmas; and the extent to which a unitarian theism was now connected with the acceptance of the philosophy of Averroës brought it about, despite the respectful attitude of Dante, who gave him a tranquil place in

¹ Renan, *Averroës*, p. 328.

² Mézières, *Pétrarque*, 1868, p. 362.

³ It is to be noted that in his opposition to the scholastics he had predecessors. Cp. Gebhart, *Origines de la Renaissance en Italie*, p. 65; and ref. to John of Salisbury above, p. 371.

⁴ Owen, p. 113. It is to be remembered that Dante also (*Convito*, ii, 8, 9; iii, 14; iv, 7) exalts Reason; but he uses the word in the old sense of mere mentality—the thinking as distinguished from the sensuous element in man; and he was fierce against all resort to reason as against faith. Petrarch was of course more of a rationalist. As to his philosophic skepticism, see Owen, p. 120. He drew the line only at doubting those things "in which doubt is sacrilege." Nevertheless he grounded his belief in immortality not on the Christian creed, but on the arguments of the Pagans (Burckhardt, p. 546).

⁵ *Epist. sine titulo*, cited by Renan, *Averroës*, p. 299. For the phrases put in Averroës' mouth by Christians, see pp. 294–8.

Hell,¹ that he came to figure as Antichrist for the faithful.² Petrarch in his letters speaks of much downright hostility to the Christian system on the part of Averroïsts³; and the association of Averroïsm with the great medical school of Padua⁴ must have promoted practical skepticism among physicians. Being formally restricted to the schools, however, it tended there to undergo the usual scholastic petrification; and the common-sense deism it encouraged outside had to subsist without literary discipline. In this form it probably reached many lands, without openly affecting culture or life; since Averroism itself was professed generally in the Carmelite order, who claimed for it orthodoxy.⁵

Alongside, however, of intellectual solvents, there were at work others of a more widely effective kind, set up by the long and sinister historic episode of the Great Papal Schism. The church, already profoundly discredited in the eleventh century by the gross disorders of the papacy, continued frequently throughout the twelfth to exhibit the old spectacle of rival popes; and late in the fourteenth (1378) there broke out the greatest schism of all. Ostensibly beginning in a riotous coercion of the electing cardinals by the Roman populace, it was maintained on the one side by the standing interest of the clergy in Italy, which called for an Italian head of the church, and on the other hand by the French interest, which had already enforced the residence of the Popes at Avignon from 1305 to 1376. It was natural that, just after the papal chair had been replaced in Italy by Gregory IX, the Romans should threaten violence to the cardinals if they chose any but an Italian; and no less natural that the French court should determine to restore a state of things in which it controlled the papacy in all save its corruption. During the seventy years of "the Captivity," Rome had sunk to the condition of a poor country town; and to the Italian clergy

¹ *Inferno*, iv, 144.

² Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 301-315.

³ *Id.* pp. 333-7; Cantù, *Gli Eretici d'Italia*, i, 176 and refs.

⁴ Renan, pp. 326-7.

⁵ *Id.* pp. 318-320.

the struggle for a restoration was a matter of economic life and death. For thirty-nine years did the schism last, being ended only by the prolonged action of the great Council of Constance in deposing the rivals of the moment and appointing Martin V (1417); and this was achieved only after there had slipped into the chair of Peter "the most worthless and infamous man to be found."¹ During the schism every species of scandal had flourished. Indulgences had been sold or distributed at random²; simony and venality abounded more than ever³; the courts of Rome and Avignon were mere rivals in avarice, indecorum, and reciprocal execration; and in addition to the moral occasion for skepticism there was the intellectual, since no one could show conclusively that the administration of sacraments was valid under either pope.⁴

In such an atmosphere, demand for "reforms" naturally made headway; and the Council of Constance (1414-1418) was convened to enact many besides the ending of the schism.⁵ But the Council itself was followed by seven hundred prostitutes⁶; and its relation to the intellectual life was defined by its bringing about, on a charge of heresy, the burning of John Huss, who had come under a letter of safe-conduct from the emperor. Thus cut off from much of the force that was needed to effect any great moral revolution in the church, the reforming movement soon fell away,⁷ and the church was left to ripen for later and more drastic treatment.

How far, nevertheless, anti-clericalism could go among the scholarly class even in Italy is seen in the career of one of the leading humanists of the Renaissance, LORENZO VALLA (1406-1457). In the work of

¹ Justinger, cited in *The Pope and the Council*, Eng. trans. p. 298.

² Hardwick, p. 357, note.

³ Cp. Bonnechese, *The Reformers before the Reformation*, Eng. trans. 1844, I, 40-43.

⁴ *The Pope and the Council*, pp. 292-5.

⁵ *Id.* p. 333.

⁶ Hardwick, p. 354, note.

⁷ Cp. Hardwick, p. 361; *The Pope and the Council*, p. 308.

his youth, *De Voluptate et Vero Bono*, a hardy vindication of aggressive Epicureanism—at a time when the title of Epicurean stood for freethinker¹—he plainly sets up a rationalist standard, affirming that science is founded on reason and Nature, and that Nature is God. Not content with a theoretic defiance of the faith, he violently attacked the church. It was probably to the protection of Alfonso of Aragon, king of Naples, who though pious was not pro-clerical,² that Valla was able to do what he did, above all to write his famous treatise, *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione*, wherein he definitely proved once for all that the “donation” in question was a fiction.³ Such an opinion had been earlier maintained at the Council of Basle by Æneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius II, and before him by the remarkable Nicolaus of Cusa;⁴ but when the existence of Valla’s work was known he had to fly from Rome afresh (1443) to Naples, where he had previously been protected for seven years. Applying the same critical spirit to more sacrosanct literature, he impugned the authenticity of the Apostles’ Creed, and of the letter of Abgarus to Jesus Christ, given by Eusebius; proceeding further to challenge many of the mistranslations in the Vulgate.⁵ For his untiring propaganda he was summoned before the Inquisition at Naples, but as usual protected by the king; whom he satisfied by professing faith in the dogmas of the church, as distinguished from ecclesiastical history and philology.

It was characteristic of the life of Italy, hopelessly committed on economic grounds to the church, that

¹ Burckhardt, p. 497, note.

² Villari, *Life and Times of Machiavelli*, Eng. trans. 3rd ed. vol. i, introd. p. 115. Cp. Burckhardt, pp. 35, 226.

³ As to its history, see “Janus,” *The Pope and the Council*, Eng. trans. p. 131 sq.

⁴ Villari, as last cited, pp. 98, 108.

⁵ It is noteworthy, however, that he did not detect, or at least did not declare, the spuriousness of the text of the three witnesses (Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, iii, 58, note). Here the piety of Alfonso, who knew his Bible by heart, may have restrained him.

Valla finally sought and found reconciliation with the papacy. He knew that his safety at Naples depended on the continued anti-papalism of the throne; he yearned for the society of Rome; and his heart was all the while with the cause of Latin scholarship rather than with that of a visionary reformation. In his as in so many cases, accordingly, intellectual rectitude gave way to lower interests; and he made unblushing offers of retractation to cardinals and pope. In view of the extreme violence of his former attacks,¹ it is not surprising that the reigning Pope, Eugenius IV, refused to be appeased; but on the election of Nicholas V (1447) he was sent for; and he died secretary to the Curia and Canon of St. John Lateran.²

Where so much of anti-clericalism could find harbourage within the church, there was naturally no lack of it without; and from the period of Boccaccio till the Catholic reaction after the Reformation a large measure of anti-clerical feeling is a constant feature in Italian life. It was so ingrained that the church had on the whole to leave it alone. From pope to monk, the mass of the clergy had forfeited respect; and gibes at their expense were household words,³ and the basis of popular songs. Thomas Guardati of Salerno, better known as Masaccio, attacks all orders of clergy in his collection of tales with such fury that only the protection of the court of Naples could well have saved him; and yet he was a good Catholic.⁴ The popular poetic literature, with certain precautions, carried the anti-clerical spirit as far as to parade a humorous non-literary skepticism, putting in the mouths of the questionable characters in its romances all manner of anti-religious

¹ See the passages transcribed by Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, i, 148.

² Villari, as last cited, pp. 98-101.

³ Cp. Gebhart, *Renaissance en Italie*, pp. 72-3; Burckhardt, pp. 458-465; Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, i, 5-34. "The authors of the most scandalous satires were themselves mostly monks or beneficed priests." (Burckhardt, p. 465.)

⁴ Burckhardt, pp. 451-461; J. A. Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy: The Age of the Despots*, ed. 1897, p. 359; Villari, *Life and Times of Machiavelli*, i, 153.

opinions which it would be unsafe to print as one's own, but which in this way reached appreciative readers who were more or less in sympathy with the author's sentiments and stratagems. The *Morgante Maggiore* of PULCI (1488) is the great type of such early Voltairean humour:¹ it revives the spirit of the Goliards, and passes unscathed in the new Renaissance world, where the earlier Provençal impiety had gone the way of the Inquisition bonfire, books and men alike. Beneath its mockery there is a constant play of rational thought, and every phase of contemporary culture is glanced at in the spirit of always unembittered humour which makes Pulci "the most lovable among the great poets of the Renaissance."² It is noteworthy that Pulci is found affirming the doctrine of an Antipodes with absolute openness, and with impunity, over a hundred years before Galileo. This survival of ancient pagan science seems to have been obscurely preserved all through the Middle Ages. In the eighth century, as we have seen, the priest Feargal or Vergilius, of Bavaria, was deposed from his office by the Pope, on the urging of St. Boniface, for maintaining it; but he was reinstated, died a bishop, and became a saint; and not only that doctrine but that of the two-fold motion of the earth was affirmed with impunity before Pulci by Nicolaus of Cusa³ (d. 1464); though in the fourteenth century Nicolaus of Autricuria had to recant his teaching of the atomistic theory.⁴ As Pulci had specially satirised the clergy and ecclesiastical miracles, his body was refused burial in consecrated ground; but the general temper was such as to save him from clerical enmity up to that point.

The Inquisition, too, was now greatly enfeebled

¹ See it well analysed by Mr. Owen, pp. 147-160. Cp. Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, i, 199. M. Perrens describes Pulci as "emancipated from all belief"; but holds that he "bantered the faith without the least design of attacking religion" (*La Civilisation florentine*, p. 151). But cp. Villari, *Life of Machiavelli*, Eng. trans. i, 159-160.

² Owen, p. 160. So also Leigh Hunt, and the editor of the *Parnaso Italiano*, there cited.

³ Below, § 6.

⁴ Below, § 5, *end.*

throughout central and northern as well as southern Italy. In 1440 the materialist, mathematician, and astrologer Amadeo de'Landi, of Milan, was accused of heresy by the orthodox Franciscans. Not only was he acquitted, but his chief accuser was condemned in turn to make public retractation, which he however declined to do.¹ Fifty years later the Inquisition was still nearly powerless. In 1497 we find a freethinking physician at Bologna, Gabriele de Salò, protected by his patrons against its wrath, although he "was in the habit of maintaining that Christ was not God, but son of Joseph and Mary.....; that by his cunning he had deceived the world; that he may have died on the cross on account of crimes which he had committed,"² and so forth. Nineteen years before, Galeotto Marcio had come near being burned for writing that any man who lived uprightly according to his own conscience would go to heaven, whatever his faith; and it needed the Pope, Sixtus IV, his former pupil, to save him from the Inquisition.³ Others, who went further, ran similar risks; and in 1500 Giorgio da Novara was burned at Bologna, presumptively for denying the divinity of Jesus.⁴ A bishop of Aranda, however, is said to have done the same with impunity, in the same year,⁵ besides rejecting hell and purgatory, and denouncing indulgences as a device of the popes to fill their pockets.

During this period, too, the philosophy of Averroës, as set forth in his "Great Commentary" on Aristotle, was taught in North Italy with an outspokenness not before known. Gaetano of Siena began to lecture on the Commentary at Padua in 1436; it was in part printed there in 1472; and from 1471 to 1499 Nicoletto Vernias seems to have taught, in the Paduan chair of philosophy, the Averroïst doctrine of the world-soul, thus virtually denying the Christian doctrine of immortality. Violent opposition was raised when his pupil Niphus (Nifo)

¹ Lea, ii, 271-2. Cp. pp. 282-4.

³ *Id.* p. 500.

⁴ *Id.* p. 502.

² Burckhardt, p. 502.

⁵ *Id.* p. 503, note.

printed similar doctrine in a treatise, *De Intellectu et Dæmonibus* (1492); but the professors when necessary disclaimed the more dangerous tenets of Averroism.¹ Nifo it was who put in print the maxim of his tribe: *Loquendum est ut plures, sentiendum ut pauci*—"think with the few; speak with the majority."²

As in ancient Greece, humorous blasphemy seems to have fared better than serious unbelief.³ As is remarked by Hallam, the number of vindications of Christianity produced in Italy in the fifteenth century proves the existence of much unbelief;⁴ and it is clear that, apart from academic doubt, there was abundant freethinking among men of the world.⁵ The biographer of Pope Paul II has recorded how that pontiff found in his own court, among certain young men, the opinion that faith rested rather on trickeries of the saints (*sanctorum astutiis*) than on evidence; which opinion the Pope eradicated.⁶ But in the career of Perugino (1446-1524), who from being a sincerely religious painter became a skeptic in his wrath against the church which slew Savonarola,⁷ we have evidence of a movement of things which no papal fiat could arrest.

Perhaps the most fashionable form of quasi-freethinking in the Italy of the fifteenth century was that which

¹ Cp. R. C. Christie's essay, "Pomponatius—a Skeptic," in his *Selected Essays and Papers*, 1902, pp. 131-2; Renan, *Averroès*, pp. 345-352.

² *Comm. in Aristot. de Gen. et Corr.* lib. i, fol. 29, G., cited by Ellis in note on Bacon, who cites a version of the phrase in the *De Augmentis*, B.v, *end.* As to Nifo see Nourrisson, *Machiavel*, 1875, ch. xii.

³ As to ribald blasphemies by the Roman clergy, see Erasmus, *Epist.* xxxvi, 34, cited by Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, p. 376, *note.*

⁴ *Lit. Hist. of Europe*, i, 142. Following Eichhorn, Hallam notes vindications by Marsilio Ficino, Alfonso de Spina (a converted Jew), Æneas Sylvius, and Pico di Mirandola; observing that the work of the first-named "differs little from modern apologies of the same class."

⁵ Cp. Ranke, *History of the Popes*, Eng. trans. 1-vol. ed. 1859, pp. 22, and *notes* (ed. 1841, i, 74).

⁶ Paul Canensius, cited by Ranke.

⁷ This view seems to solve the mystery as to Perugino's creed. Vasari (ed. Milanesi, iii, 589) calls him "persona di assai poca religione." Mezzanotte (*Della vita di P. Vanucci*, etc., 1836, p. 172 sq.) indignantly rejects the statement, but notes that in Ciatti's MS. annals of Perugia, ad ann. 1524, the mind of the painter is said to have been *come una tavola rasa* in religious matters. Mazzanotte holds that Pietro has been there confounded with a later Perugian painter.

prevailed in the Platonic Academy of Florence in the period, though the chief founder of the Academy, Marsilio Ficino, wrote a defence of Christianity, and his most famous adherent, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, planned another. Renaissance Platonism began with the Greek Georgios Gemistos, surnamed Plethon because of his devotion to Plato, which was such as to scandalise common Christians and exasperate Aristotelians. The former had the real grievance that his system ostensibly embodied polytheism and logically involved pantheism;¹ and one of his antagonists, Gennadios Georgios Scolarios, who became patriarch of Constantinople, caused his book *On Laws* to be burned;² but the allegation of his Aristotelian enemy and countryman, Georgios Trapezuntios, that he prayed to the sun as creator of the world,³ is only one of the polemical amenities of the period. Ostensibly he was a believing Christian, stretching Christian love to accommodate the beliefs of Plato; but it was not zeal for orthodoxy that moved Cosimo dei Medici, at Florence, to embrace the new Platonism, and train up Marsilio Ficino to be its prophet. The *furor allegoricus* which inspired the whole school⁴ was much more akin to ancient Gnosticism than to orthodox Christianity, and constantly points to pantheism⁵ as the one philosophic solution of its ostensible polytheism. When, too, Ficino undertakes to vindicate Christianity against the unbelievers in his *Della Religione Cristiana*, "the most solid arguments that he can find in its favour are the answers of the Sibyls, and the prophecies of the coming of Jesus Christ to be found in Virgil, Plato, Plotinus, and Porphyry."⁶

¹ Cp. Burckhardt, pp. 524, 541, *notes*; Villari, *Life and Times of Machiavelli*, i, 124. "It was easy to see by his words that he hoped for the restoration of the pagan religion" (Villari, *Life and Times of Savonarola*, Eng. trans. p. 51).

² Only a few fragments of it survive. Villari, *Life and Times of Savonarola*, Eng. trans. p. 51.

³ Carriere, *Philos. Weltanschauung der Reformationszeit*, 1847, p. 13.

⁴ Cp. Villari, *Life of Machiavelli*, i, 128-134.

⁵ Cp. Perrens, *Hist. de Florence (1434-1531)*, i, 258.

⁶ *Id.* p. 257. Cp. Villari, *Machiavelli*, i, 132; *Savonarola*, p. 60.

x

How far such a spirit of expatiation and speculation, however visionary and confused, tended to foster heresy is seen in the brief career of the once famous young Pico della Mirandola, Ficino's wealthy pupil. Parading a portentous knowledge of tongues¹ and topics at the age of twenty-four, he undertook (1486) to maintain a list of nine hundred *Conclusiones* or propositions at Rome against all comers, and to pay their expenses. Though he had obtained the permission of the Pope, Innocent VIII, the challenge speedily elicited angry charges of heresy against certain of the theses, and the Pope had to stop the proceedings and issue an ecclesiastical commission of inquiry. Some of the propositions were certainly ill adjusted to Catholic ideas, in particular the sayings that "neither the cross of Christ nor any image is to be adored *adoratione latræ*"—with worship; that no one believes what he believes merely because he wishes to; and that Jesus did not physically descend into hell.² Pico, retiring to Florence, defended himself in an *Apologia*, which provoked fresh outcry; whereupon he was summoned to proceed to Rome; and though the powerful friendship of Lorenzo dei Medici procured a countermand of the order, it was not till 1496 that he received, from Alexander VI, a full papal remission.

Among the unachieved projects of his later life, which ended at the age of thirty-one, was that of a treatise *Adversus Hostes Ecclesiæ*, to be divided into seven sections, the first dealing with "The avowed and open enemies of Christianity," and the second with "Atheists and those who reject every religious system upon their own reasoning"; and the others with Jews, Moslems, idolaters, heretics, and unrighteous believers.³ The vogue of unbelief thus signified was probably increased

¹ "Of the majority of the twenty-two languages he was supposed to have studied, he knew little more than the alphabet and the elements of grammar" (Villari, *Machiavelli*, i, 135). As to Pico's character, which was not saintly, see Perrens, *Histoire* as cited, i, 561-2.

² Cp. Gresswell, *Memoirs of Politianus, Picus*, etc., 2nd ed. 1805, 235; McCrie, *The Reformation in Italy*, ed. 1856, p. 33, note.

³ Gresswell, pp. 330-1.

by the whole speculative habit of Pico's own school,¹ which tended only less than Averroism to a pantheism subversive of the Christian creed. It is noteworthy that, while Ficino believed devoutly in astrology,² Pico rejected it, and left among his confused papers a treatise against it which his nephew contrived to transcribe and publish;³ but it does not appear that this served either the cause of religion or that of science. The educated Italian world, while political independence lasted, remained in various degrees freethinking, pantheistic, and given to astrology, no school or teacher combining rationalism in philosophy with sound scientific methods.

One of the great literary figures of the later Renaissance, NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI (1469-1527), is the standing proof of the divorce of the higher intelligence of Italy from the faith as well as the cause of the church before the Reformation. With this divorce he expressly charges the church itself, giving as the first proof of its malfeasance that the peoples nearest Rome were the least religious.⁴ To him the church was the supreme evil in Italian politics,⁵ the "stone in the wound"; and in a famous passage he gives his opinion that "our religion, having shown us the truth and the true way, makes us esteem less political honour (*l'onore del mondo*)"; and that whereas the Pagan religion canonised only men crowned with public honour, as generals and statesmen, "our religion has glorified rather the humble and contemplative men than the active," placing the highest good in humility and abjection, teaching rather to suffer than to do, and so making the world debile and ready to be a prey to scoundrels.⁶ The passage which follows, putting the blame on men for thus misreading their religion, is a fair sample of the grave mockery with which the men of that age veiled their unfaith.⁷

¹ Cp. K. M. Sauer, *Geschichte der italienischen Litteratur*, 1883, p. 109; Villari, *Machiavelli*, i, 138.

² Villari, *Machiavelli*, i, 133.

³ Gresswell, pp. 331-2.

⁴ *Discorsi sopra Tito Livio*, i, 12.

⁵ *Istorie fiorentine*, liv. i; *Discorsi*, i, 12.

⁶ *Discorsi*, ii, 2.

⁷ For another point of view see Owen, as cited, p. 167.

Machiavelli was reputed in his own world an atheist;¹ and he certainly was no religionist. He indeed never avows atheism, but neither did any other writer of the epoch;² and the whole tenour of his writings is that of a man who had at least put aside the belief in a prayer-answering deity;³ though, with the intellectual arbitrariness which still affected all the thought of his age, he avows a belief that all great political changes are heralded by prodigies, celestial signs, prophecies, or revelations⁴—here conforming to the ordinary superstition of his troublous time.

It belongs, further, to the manifold self-contradiction of the Renaissance that, holding none of the orthodox religious beliefs, he argues insistently and at length for the value and importance of religion, however untrue, as a means to political strength. Through five successive chapters of his *Discourses on Livy* he presses and illustrates his thesis, praising Numa as a sagacious framer of useful fictions, and as setting up new and false beliefs which made for the unification and control of the Roman people. The argument evolved with such strange candour is, of course, of the nature of so much Renaissance science, an à priori error: there was no lack of religious faith and fear in primitive Rome before the age of Numa; and the legend concerning him is a product of the very primordial mythopoiesis which Machiavelli supposes him to have set on foot. It is in

¹ In the Italian translation of Bacon's essays, made for Bacon in 1618 by an English hand, Machiavelli is branded in one passage as an *impio*, and in another his name is dropped. See Routledge's ed. of Bacon's *Works*, pp. 749, 751. The admiring Paolo Giovio called him *irrisor et atheos*; and Cardinal Pole said the *Prince* was so full of every kind of irreligion that it might have been written by the hand of Satan (Nourrisson, *Machiavel*, 1875, p. 4).

² Burckhardt, pp. 499-500. Cp. Owen, pp. 165-168. It is thus impossible to be sure of the truth of the statement of Gregorovius (*Lucrezia Borgia*, Eng. trans. 1904, p. 25) that "There were no women skeptics or freethinkers; they would have been impossible in the society of that day." Where dissimulation of unbelief was necessarily habitual there may have been some women unbelievers as well as many men.

³ Mr. Owen's characterisation of Machiavelli's *Asino d'oro* as a "satire on the freethought of his age" (p. 177) will not stand investigation. See his own note, p. 178.

⁴ *Discorsi*, i, 56.

the spirit of that fallacious theory of a special superinduced religiosity in Romans¹ that the great Florentine proceeds to charge the church with having made the Italians religionless and vicious (*senza religione e cattivi*). Had he lived a century or two later he might have seen in the case of zealously believing Spain a completer political and social prostration than had fallen in his day on Italy, and this alongside of regeneration in an unbelieving France. But indeed it was the bitterness of spirit of a suffering patriot looking back yearningly to an idealised Rome, rather than the insight of the author of *The Prince*,² that inspired his reasoning on the political uses of religion; for at the height of his exposition he notes, with his keen eye for fact, how the most strenuous use of religious motive had failed to support the Samnites against the cool courage of Romans led by a rationalising general;³ and he notes, too, with a sardonic touch of hopefulness, how Savonarola had contrived to persuade the people of contemporary Florence that he had intercourse with deity.⁴ Italy then had faith enough and to spare.

Such argument, in any case, even if untouched by the irony which tinges Machiavelli's, could never avail to restore faith; men cannot become believers on the motive of mere belief in the value of belief; and the total effect of Machiavelli's manifold reasoning on human affairs, with its startling lucidity, its constant insistence on causation, its tacit negation of every notion of Providence, must have been, in Italy as elsewhere, rather to prepare the way for inductive science than to rehabilitate supernaturalism, even among those who assented to his theory of Roman development. In his hands the method of science begins to emerge, turned to the most difficult of its tasks, before

¹ As we saw, Polybius in his day took a similar view, coming as he did from Greece, where military failure had followed on a certain growth of unbelief. Machiavelli was much influenced by Polybius. Villari, ii, 9.

² Cp. Tullo Massarani, *Studii di letteratura e d'arte*, 1899, p. 96.

³ *Discorsi*, i, 15.

⁴ *Id.* i, 11, *end.*

Copernicus had applied it to the simpler problem of the motion of the solar system. After centuries in which the name of Aristotle had been constantly invoked to small scientific purpose, this man of the world, who knew little or nothing of Aristotle's *Politics*,¹ exhibits the spirit of the true Aristotle for the first time in the history of Christendom; and it is in his land after two centuries of his influence that modern sociology takes its next great stride in the work of Vico.

He is to be understood, of course, as the product of the moral and intellectual experience of the Renaissance, which prepared his audience for him. Guicciardini, his contemporary, who in comparison was unblamed for irreligion, though an even warmer hater of the Papacy, has left in writing the most explicit avowals of incredulity as to the current conceptions of the supernatural, and declares concerning miracles that as they occur in every religion they prove none.² At the same time he professes firm faith in Christianity;³ and others who would not have joined him there were often as inconsistent in the ready belief they gave to magic and astrology. The time was after all one of artistic splendour and scientific and critical ignorance;⁴ and its freethought had the inevitable defects that ignorance entails. Thus the belief in the reality of witchcraft, sometimes discarded by churchmen,⁵ is sometimes maintained by heretics. Rejected by John of Salisbury in the twelfth century, and by the freethinking Pietro of Abano in 1303, it was affirmed and established by Thomas Aquinas, asserted by Gregory IX, and made a motive for uncounted slaughters by the Inquisition. In 1460 a theologian had been forced to retract, and still punished, for expressing

¹ Villari, ii, 93-94.

² Burckhardt, p. 464; Owen, p. 180, and refs.

³ Owen, p. 181. Compare the whole account of Guicciardini's rather confused opinions.

⁴ Despite the fact that Italy had most of what scientific knowledge existed. Burckhardt, p. 292.

⁵ "A man might at the same time be condemned as a heretic in Spain for affirming, and in Italy for denying, the reality of the witches' nightly rides" (*The Pope and the Council*, p. 258).

doubt on the subject; and in 1471 Pope Sixtus VI reserved to the Papacy the privilege of making and selling the waxen models of limbs used as preservatives against enchantments. In the sixteenth century a whole series of books directed against the belief were put on the Index, and a Jesuit handbook codified the creed. Yet a Minorite friar, Alfonso Spina, pronounced it a heretical delusion, and taught that those burned suffered not for witchcraft but for heresy,¹ and on the other hand some men of a freethinking turn held it. Thus the progress of rational thought was utterly precarious.

Of the literary freethinking of the later Renaissance the most famous representative is POMPONAZZI, or Pomponatius (1462–1525), for whom it has been claimed that he “really initiated the philosophy of the Italian Renaissance.”² The Italian Renaissance, however, was in reality as good as over when Pomponazzi’s treatise on the Immortality of the Soul appeared (1516); and that topic was the commonest in the schools and controversies of that day.³ He has been at times spoken of as an Averroïst, on the ground that he denied immortality; but he did so in reality as a disciple of Alexander of Aphrodisias, a rival commentator to Averroës. What is remarkable in his case is not the denial of immortality, which we have seen to be frequent in Dante’s time, and more or less implicit in Averroïsm, but his contention that ethics could do very well without the belief⁴—a thing that it still took some courage to affirm, though the spectacle of the life of the faithful might have been supposed sufficient to win it a ready hearing. Presumably his rationalism, which made him challenge the then canonical authority of the scholasticised Aristotle,

¹ *The Pope and the Council*, pp. 249–261. It was another Spina who wrote on the other side.

² F. Fiorentino, *Pietro Pomponazzi*, 1868, p. 30.

³ Owen, pp. 197–8, and refs. Cp. Renan, *Averroës*, pp. 353–362; Christie, as cited, p. 133.

⁴ Cp. Owen, pp. 201, 218; Lange, i, 183–7 (trans. i, 220–225). He, however, granted that the mass of mankind, “brutish and materialised,” needed the belief in heaven and hell to moralise them (Christie, pp. 140–1).

went further than his avowed doubts as to a future state ; since his profession of obedience to the church's teaching, and his reiteration of the old academic doctrine of two-fold truth—one truth for science and philosophy and another for theology¹—are as dubious as any in philosophic history.² Of him, or of Lorenzo Valla, more justly than of Petrarch, might it be said that he is the father of modern criticism, since Valla sets on foot at once historical and textual analysis, while Pomponazzi anticipates the treatment given to Biblical miracles by the rationalising German theologians of the end of the eighteenth century.³ He, too, was a fixed enemy of the clergy ; and it was not for lack of will that they failed to destroy him. He happened to be a personal favourite of Leo X, who saw to it that the storm of opposition to Pomponazzi—a storm as much of anger on behalf of Aristotle, who had been shown by him to doubt the immortality of the soul, as on behalf of Christianity—should end in an official farce of reconciliation.⁴ He was however not free to publish his treatises, *De Incantationibus* and *De Fato, Libero Arbitrio, et Prædestinatione*. These, completed in 1520, were not printed till after his death, in 1556 and 1557 ;⁵ and by reason of their greater simplicity, as well as of their less dangerous form of heresy, were much more widely read than the earlier treatise, thus contributing much to the spread of sane thought on the subjects of witchcraft, miracles, and special providences.

¹ This principle, though deriving from Averroïsm, and condemned, as we have seen, by Pope John XXI, had been affirmed by so high an orthodox authority as Albertus Magnus. Cp. Owen, pp. 211-212, *note*. While thus officially recognised, it was of course denounced by the devout when they saw how it availed to save heretics from harm. Mr. Owen has well pointed out (p. 238) the inconsistency of the believers who maintain that faith is independent of reason, and yet denounce as blasphemous the profession to believe by faith what is not intelligible by philosophy.

² Owen, p. 209, *note*. "Son école est une école de laïques, de médecins, d'esprits forts, de libres penseurs" (Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartésienne*, 1854, i, 3).

³ Owen, p. 210 ; Christie, p. 151.

⁴ Christie, pp. 141-147.

⁵ *Id.* p. 149.

Whether his metaphysic on the subject of the immortality of the soul had much effect on popular thought may be doubted. What the Renaissance most needed in both its philosophic and its practical thought was a scientific foundation ; and science, from first to last, was more hindered than helped by the environment. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, charges of necromancy against physicians and experimenters were frequently joined with imputations of heresy, and on such charges not a few were burned.¹ The economic conditions, too, were all unfavourable to solid research.

When Galileo in 1589 was made Professor of Mathematics at Pisa, his salary was only 60 scudi (= dollars), while the Professor of Medicine got 2,000. (Karl von Gebler, *Galileo Galilei*, Eng. trans. 1879, p. 9.) At Padua, later, Galileo had 520 florins, with a prospect of rising to as many scudi. (Letter given in *The Private Life of Galileo*, Boston, 1870, p. 61.) The Grand Duke finally gave him a pension of 1,000 scudi at Florence. (*Id.* p. 64.) This squares with Bacon's complaint (*Advancement of Learning*, B. ii : *De Augmentis*, B. ii, ch. 1—*Works*, Routledge's ed. pp. 76, 422-3) that, especially in England, the salaries of lecturers in arts and professions were injuriously small, and that, further, "among so many noble foundations of colleges in Europe.....they are all dedicated to professions, and none left free to the study of arts and sciences at large." In Italy, however, philosophy was fairly well endowed. Pomponazzi received a salary of 900 Bolognese lire when he obtained the chair of Philosophy at Bologna in 1509. (Christie, essay cited, p. 138.)

Medicine was nearly as dogmatic as theology. Even philosophy was in large part shouldered aside by the financial motives which led men to study law in preference ;² and when the revival of ancient literature gained ground it absorbed energy to the detriment of scientific study,³ the wealthy amateurs being ready to pay high prices for manuscripts of classics, and for classical teaching ; but not for patient investigation of natural fact. The humanists, so-called, were often forces of

¹ Burckhardt, p. 291.

² Gebhart, pp. 59-63 ; Burckhardt, p. 211.

³ Cp. Burckhardt, p. 291.

enlightenment and reform ; witness such a type as the high-minded POMPONIO LETO (Pomponius Laetus), pupil and successor of Lorenzo Valla, and one of the many "pagan" scholars of the later Renaissance ;¹ but the discipline of mere classical culture was insufficient to make them, as a body, qualified leaders either of thought or action,² in such a society as that of decaying Italy. Only after the fall of Italian liberties, the decay of the church's wealth and power, the loss of commerce, and the consequent decline of the arts, did men turn to truly scientific pursuits. From Italy, indeed, long after the Reformation, came a new stimulus to freethought which affected all the higher civilisation of northern Europe. But the failure to solve the political problem, a failure which led to the Spanish tyranny, meant the establishment of bad conditions for the intellectual as for the social life ; and an arrest of freethought in Italy was a necessary accompaniment of the arrest of the higher literature. What remained was the afterglow of a great and energetic period rather than a spirit of inquiry ; and we find the old Averroïst scholasticism, in its most pedantic form, lasting at the university of Padua till far into the seventeenth century. "A philosophy," remarks in this connection an esteemed historian, "a mode of thought, a habit of mind, may live on in the lecture-rooms of Professors for a century after it has been abandoned by the thinkers, the men of letters, and the men of the world."³ The avowal has its bearings nearer home than Padua.

While it lasted, the light of Italy had shone upon all the thought of Europe. Not only the other nations but the scholars of the Jewish race reflected it ; for to the first half of the sixteenth century belongs the Jew Menahem Asariah de Rossi, whose work, *Meor Enayim*, "Light of the Eyes," is "the first attempt by a Jew to

¹ Burckhardt, pp. 279-280 ; Villari, *Life of Machiavelli*, pp. 106-7.

² Burckhardt, Pt. iii, ch. 11.

³ Dr. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1895, i., 265. Cp. Renan, *Averroès*, Avert.

submit the statements of the Talmud to a critical examination, and to question the value of tradition in its historical records." And he did not stand alone among the Jews of Italy; for, while Elijah Delmedigo, at the end of the fifteenth century, was in a didactic Maimonist fashion doubtful of literary tradition, his grandson, Joseph Solomon Delmedigo, flourishing early in the seventeenth century, "wrote various pamphlets of a deeply skeptical character."¹ That this movement of Jewish rationalism should be mainly limited to the south was inevitable, since there only were Jewish scholars in an intellectual environment. There could be no better testimony to the higher influence of the Italian Renaissance.

§ 2. *Popular Evolution in Europe.*

Inasmuch as the direct process of the Renaissance was continuous only in Italy, it is properly to Italian history that the name applies. A similar process of course occurred later in France and in England, and in a sense in Germany; but the great intellectual revivals in these countries were tardy results of Italian influence. In the northern countries the church monopolised culture to an extent it never did in the south.

Despite, however, the premium put by the church on devotion to its cause and doctrine, and despite its success in strangling specific forms of heresy, hostility to its own pretensions germinated everywhere,² especially in the countries most alien to Italy in language and civilisation. An accomplished Catholic scholar³ sums up that "from about the middle of the twelfth century the whole secular and religious literature of Europe grew more and more hostile to the papacy and the curia."

¹ Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, pp. 213, 420-1.

² Hallam, *Middle Ages*, 11th ed. ii, 218; Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, i, 5-34; Gieseler, § 90 (ii, 572); Freytag, *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit*, Bd. II, Abth. i, 4te Aufl. pp. 318-319.

³ "Janus," *The Pope and the Council*, Eng. trans. 2nd ed. 1869, p. 220. For proofs see same work, pp. 220-234.

The church's own economic conditions, constantly turning its priesthood, despite all precautions, into a money-making and shamelessly avaricious class, ensured it a perpetuity of ill-will and denunciation. The popular literature which now began to grow throughout Christendom with the spread of political order was everywhere turned to the account of anti-clerical satire ; and only the defect of real knowledge secured by the church's own policy prevented such hostility from developing into rational unbelief. As it was, a tendency to criticise at once the socio-economic code and practice and the details of creed and worship is seen in a series of movements from the thirteenth century onwards ; and some of the most popular literature of that age is deeply tinged with the new spirit. After the overthrow of the well-organised anti-clericalism of the Cathari and other heretics in Languedoc, however, no movement equally systematic and equally heretical flourished on any large scale ; and as even those heresies on their popular side were essentially supernaturalist, and tended to set up one hierarchy in place of another, it would be vain to look for anything like a consistent or searching rationalism among the people in the period broadly termed medieval, including the Renaissance.

It is somewhat of a straining of the facts, for instance, to say of the humorous tale of *Reynard the Fox*, so widely popular in the thirteenth century, that it is essentially anti-clerical to the extent that "Reynard is laic ; Isengrim [the wolf] is clerical" (Bartoli, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, i, 307 ; cp. Owen, *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, p. 44). The *Reynard* epic, in origin a simple humorous animal-story, had various later forms. Some of these, as the Latin poem, and especially the version attributed to Peter of St. Cloud, were markedly anti-clerical, the latter exhibiting a spirit of all-round profanity hardly compatible with belief (cp. Gervinus, *Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung*, 5te Ausg. i, 227-8 ; Gebhart, *Les Origines de la Renais. en Italie*, 1879, p. 39) ; but the version current in the Netherlands, which was later rendered into English prose by Caxton, is of a very different character (Gervinus, p. 229 sq.). In Caxton's version it is impossible to regard Reynard as laic and Isengrim as clerical ; though in the Latin and other

versions the wolf figures as monk or abbot. (See also the various shorter satires published by Grimm in his *Reinhart Fuchs*, 1834.) Sometimes the authorship is itself clerical, one party or order satirising another; sometimes the spirit is religious, sometimes markedly irreverent. (Gervinus, pp. 214-221.)

The anti-clerical tendency was strongest in France, where in the thirteenth century lay scholarship stood highest. In the reign of Philippe le Bel (end of thirteenth century) was composed the poem *Fauvel*, by François de Rues, which is a direct attack on pope and clergy (Saintsbury, *Short Hist. of French Lit.* 1882, p. 57). But the remark that the *Roman de la Rose* is a "popular satire on the beliefs of Romanism" (Owen, p. 44) can hardly be taken without qualification. The *Roman* is rather an intellectual expression of the literary reaction against asceticism (cp. Bartoli, p. 319, quoting Lenient) which had been spontaneously begun by the Goliards and Troubadours. At the same time this lengthy poem, one of the most popular books in Europe for two hundred years, does stand for the new secular spirit alike in "its ingrained religion and its nascent freethought" (Saintsbury, p. 87); and with the *Reynard* epic it may be taken as representing the beginning of "a whole revolution, the resurgence and affirmation of the laity, the new force which is to transform the world, against the church" (Bartoli, *Storia*, i, 308; cp. Demogeot, *Hist. de la litt. fr.* 5e éd. pp. 130-1, 157; Lanson, pp. 132-6). The semi-irreligious cynicism of Jean de Meung's part of the work (cp. the pseudo-Chaucerian English version, Bell's ed. of Chaucer, 1878, passage in vol. iv, p. 230), and the frequent flings at the clergy, were sufficient to draw upon it the anger of the church (Sismondi, *Lit. of Southern Europe*, i, 216).

It would be a bad misconception to infer from the abundant signs of popular disrespect for the clergy that the mass of the laity even in Italy, for instance, were unbelievers. They never were anything of the kind. At all times they were deeply superstitious, easily swayed by religious emotion, credulous as to relics, miracles, visions, prophecies, responsive to pulpit eloquence, readily passing from derision of worldly priests to worship of austere ones.¹ When Machiavelli

¹ See in Symonds' *Renaissance in Italy*, vol. i (*Age of the Despots*), ed. 1897, pp. 361-9, and Appendix IV, on "Religious Revivals in Medieval Italy." Those revivals occurred from time to time after Savonarola.

said that religion was gone from Italy he was thinking of the upper classes, among whom theism was normal,¹ and the upper clergy, who were often at once superstitious and corrupt. As for the common people, it was impossible that they should be grounded rationalists as regarded the great problems of life. They were merely the raw material on which knowledge might work if it could reach them, which it never did. And the common people everywhere else stood at or below the culture level of those of Italy.

For lack of other culture than Biblical, then, even the popular heresy tended to run into mysticisms which were only so far more rational than the dogmas and rites of the church that they stood for some actual reflection. A partial exception, indeed, may be made in the case of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, a sect set up in Germany in the early years of the thirteenth century, by one Ortlieb, on the basis of the pantheistic teachings of Amaury of Bène and David of Dinant.² Their doctrines were set forth in a special treatise or sacred book, called *The Nine Rocks*. The *Fratres liberi spiritus* seem to have been identical with the sect of the "Holy Spirit";³ but their tenets were heretical in a high degree, including as they did a denial of personal immortality, and consequently of the notions of heaven, hell, and purgatory. Even the sect's doctrine of the Holy Spirit was heretical in another way, inasmuch as it ran, if its opponents can be believed, to the old antinomian assertion that anyone filled with the Spirit was sinless, whatever deeds he might do.⁴ As always, such antinomianism strengthened the hands of the clergy against the heresy, though the Brethren seem to have

¹ Cp. Villari, *Machiavelli*, i, 138.

² Gieseler, *Per. III*, Div. iii, § 90 (Amer. ed. 1865, ii, 590); Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, ii, 319-320.

³ Kurtz, i, 435-6.

⁴ Lea, i, 320-1. Cp. Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, Eng. trans. ii, 15-22; and Mosheim, *13 Cent.* Pt. ii, ch. v, § 11, and *notes*. The doctrine of the treatise *De Novem Rupibus* is that of an educated thinker, and is in parts strongly antinomian, but always on pantheistic grounds.

been originally very ascetic ; and inasmuch as their pantheism involved the idea that Satan also had in him the divine essence, they were duly accused of devil-worship.¹ On general principles they were furiously persecuted ; but all through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and even in the fifteenth, they are found in various parts of central and western Europe,² often in close alliance with the originally orthodox communities known in France and Holland by the names of *Turlupins* and *Beguins* or *Beguines*, and in Germany and Belgium as *Beguttæ* or *Beghards*,³ akin to the Lollards.

These in turn are to be understood in connection with developments which took place in the thirteenth century within the church—notably the rise of the great orders of Mendicant Friars, of which the two chief were founded about 1216 by Francis of Assisi and the Spanish Dominic, the latter a fierce persecutor in the Albigensian crusade. Nothing availed more to preserve or restore for a time the church's prestige. The old criticism of priestly and monastic avarice and worldliness was disarmed by the sudden appearance and rapid spread of a priesthood and brotherhood of poverty ; and the obvious devotion of thousands of the earlier adherents went to the general credit of the church. Yet the descent of the new orders to the moral and economic levels of the old was only a question of time ; and no process could more clearly illustrate the futility of all schemes of regenerating the world on non-rational principles. Apart from the vast encouragement given to sheer mendicancy among the poor, the orders themselves substantially apostatised from their own rules within a generation.

The history of the Franciscans in particular is like

¹ Lea, i, 323-4.

² Cp. Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung*, ii, 240-9.

³ Mosheim, 13 Cent. Pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 40-43, and *notes* ; ch. v, § 9. The names *Beguin* and *Beghard* seem to have been derived from the old German verb *beggan*, to beg. In the Netherlands, *Beguine* was a name for women ; and *Beghard* for men.

that of the church in general—one of rapid lapse into furious schism, with a general reversion to gross self-seeking on the part of the majority, originally vowed to utter poverty. Elias, the first successor of Francis, appointed by the Saint himself, proved an intolerable tyrant; and in his day began the ferocious strife between the “Spirituals,” who insisted on the founder’s ideal of poverty, and the majority, who insisted on accepting the wealth which the world either bestowed or could be cajoled into bestowing on the order. The majority, of course, ultimately overbore the Spirituals, the papacy supporting them.¹ They followed the practically universal law of monastic life. The *Humiliati*, founded before the thirteenth century, had to be suppressed by the Pope in the sixteenth, for sheer corruption of morals; and the Franciscans and Dominicans, who speedily became bitterly hostile to each other, were in large measure little better. Even in the middle of the thirteenth century they were attacked by the Sorbonne doctor, William of St. Amour, in a book on *The Perils of the Latter Times*;² and in England in the fourteenth century we find Wiclif assailing the begging friars as the earlier satirists had assailed the abbots and monks. The worst of the trouble for the church was that the mendicants were detested by bishops and the beneficed priests, whose credit they undermined, and whose revenues they intercepted. That the Franciscans and Dominicans remained socially powerful till the Reformation was due to the energy developed by their corporate organisation and the measure of education they soon secured on their own behalf; not to any general superiority on their part to the “secular” clergy so-called.³ Indeed it was to the latter, within the church,

¹ See the record in Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, B. III, cc. i–iii.

² Praised in the *Roman de la Rose*, Eng. vers. in Bell’s ed. as cited, p. 228. William was answered by the Dominican Thomas Aquinas.

³ Cp. Mosheim, 13 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 18–40; Hallam, *Europe in the Middle Ages*, ch. vii, pt. 2 (11th ed. ii, 305 sq.); Gebhart, *Les Origines de la Renaissance*, p. 42; Berington, *Lit. Hist. of the Middle Ages*, p. 244; Lea, *Hist. of Inq.* B. iii, ch. i. The special work of the Dominicans was the establishment everywhere of the Inquisition. Mosheim, as

that most pre-Reformation reformers looked for sympathy.

At the outset, however, the movement of the Mendicant Friars gave a great impulsion to the lay communities of the type of the Beguines and Beghards who had originated in the Netherlands, and who practised at once mendicancy and charity very much on the early Franciscan lines;¹ and the spirit of innovation led in both cases to forms of heresy. That of the Beguines and Beghards arose mainly through their association with the Brethren of the Free Spirit; and they suffered persecution as did the latter; while among the "Spiritual" Franciscans, who were despisers of learning, there arose a species of new religion. At the beginning of the century, Abbot Joachim, of Flora or Flores in Calabria (d. 1202), who "may be regarded as the founder of modern mysticism,"² had earned a great reputation by devout austerities, and a greater by his vaticinations,³ which he declared to be divine. One of his writings was condemned as heretical, thirteen years after his death, by the Council of Lateran; but his apocalyptic writings, and others put out in his name, had a great vogue among the rebellious Franciscans.

At length, in 1254, there was produced in Paris a book called *The Everlasting Gospel*, consisting of three of his genuine works, with a long and audacious Introduction by an anonymous hand, which expressed a spirit of innovation and revolt, mystical rather than rational, that seemed to promise the utter disruption of the Church. It declared that, as the dispensation of the Son had followed on that of the Father, so Christ's evangel

last cited, ch. v, §§ 3-6, and notes; Lea, ii, 200-1; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, ix, 155-6; Llorente, *Hist. Crit. de l'Inquis. en Espagne*, as cited, i, 49-55, 68, etc.

¹ As to the development of the Beguines from an original basis of charitable coöperation, see Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, ii, 13; Lea, ii, 351.

² Lea, iii, 10.

³ See the thirteenth-century memoirs of Fra Salimbene, Eng. trans. in T. K. L. Oliphant's *The Duke and the Scholar*, 1875, pp. 98, 103-4, 108-10, 116, 130.

in turn was to be superseded by that of the "Holy Spirit."¹ Adopted by the "Spiritual" section of the Franciscans, it brought heresy within the organisation itself, the *Introduction* being by many ascribed—probably in error—to the head of the order, John of Parma, a devotee of Joachim. On other grounds, he was ultimately deposed;² but the ferment of heresy was great. And while the Franciscans are commonly reputed to have been led by small-minded generals,³ their order, as Renan notes,⁴ not only never lost the stamp of its popular and irregular origin, but was always less orthodox in general than the Dominican. But its deviations were rather ultra-religious than rational; and some of its heresies have become orthodoxy. Thus it was the Franciscans, notably Duns Scotus, who carried the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, against the Dominicans, who held by the teaching of Thomas Aquinas, that she was conceived "in sin."⁵ Mary was thus deified on a popular impulse, dating from paganism, at the expense of Christism; and, considering that both Thomas and St. Bernard had flatly rejected the Immaculate Conception, its ultimate adoption as dogma is highly significant.⁶

In the year 1260, when, according to the "Eternal Gospel," the new dispensation of the Holy Spirit was to begin, there was an immense excitement in northern Italy, marked by the outbreak of the order of Flagellants, self-scourgers, whose hysteria spread to other lands. Gherardo Segarelli, a youth of Parma, came forward

¹ The *Introduction* to the book, probably written by the Franciscan Gerhard, made St. Francis the angel of Rev. xiv, 6; and the ministers of the new order were to be his friars. Mosheim, 13 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 33-36, and notes. Cp. Lea, as cited; and Hahn, *Geschichte der Ketzer im Mittelalter*, 1845-50, iii, 72-175—a very full account of Joachim's teaching.

² Lea, iii, 20-25.

³ Le Clerc, *Hist. Litt. de la France*, xx, 230; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 155.

⁴ Averroès, pp. 259-260.

⁵ Cp. Mosheim, 14 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. iii, § 5; and Burnet's *Letters*, ed. Rotterdam, 1686, p. 31.

⁶ Cp. Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 75-76.

as a new Christ, had himself circumcised, swaddled, cradled, and suckled;¹ and proceeded to found a new order of "Apostolicals," after the manner of a sect of the previous century, known by the same name, who professed to return to primitive simplicity and to chastity, and reproduced what they supposed to be the morals of the early church, including the profession of ascetic cohabitation.² Some of their missionaries got as far as Germany; but Segarelli was caught, imprisoned, reduced to the status of a bishop's jester, and at length, after saving his life for a time by abjuration, burned at Parma in the year 1300.

Despite much persecution of the order, one of its adherents, Fra Dolcino, immediately began to exploit Segarelli's martyrdom, and renewed the movement by an adaptation of the "Eternal Gospel," announcing that Segarelli had begun a new era, to last till the Day of Judgment. Predicting the formation of native states, as well as the forcible purification of the papacy, he ultimately set up an armed movement, which held out in the southern Alps for two years, till the Apostolicals were reduced to cannibalism. At length (1307) they were overpowered and massacred, and Dolcino was captured, with his beautiful and devoted companion, Margherita di Trank. She was slowly burned to death before his eyes, refusing to abjure; and he in turn was gradually tortured to death, uttering no cry.³

The order subsisted for a time in secret, numbers cherishing Dolcino's memory, and practising a priestless and riteless religion, prohibiting oaths, and wholly repudiating every claim of the church.⁴ Yet another sect, called by the name of "The Spirit of Liberty"—

¹ Lea, iii, 104.

² Hardwick, p. 316; Lea, iii, 109; Mosheim, 12 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v. §§ 14-16. A sect of Apostolici had existed in Asia Minor in the fourth century. Kurtz, i, 242. Cp. Lea, i, 109, *note*. Those of the twelfth century were vehemently opposed by St. Bernard.

³ Lea, iii, 109-119.

⁴ Lea, p. 121; Kurtz, i, 437; Hardwick, p. 315, *note*, Mosheim, 13 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v, § 14, and *note*. See Dante, *Inferno*, xxviii, 55-60, as to Dolcino.

probably the origin of the name *libertini*, later applied to freethinkers in France—was linked on the one hand to the Apostolicals and on the other to the German Brethren of the Free Spirit, as well as to the Franciscan *Fraticelli*. This sect is heard of as late as 1344, when one of its members was burned.¹ And there were yet others; till it seemed as if the Latin Church were to be resolved into an endless series of schisms. But organisation, as of old, prevailed; the cohesive and aggressive force of the central system, with the natural strifes of the new movements, whether within or without² the church, sufficed to bring about their absorption or their destruction. It needed a special concurrence of economic, political, and culture forces to disrupt the fabric of the papacy.

§ 3. *Thought in Spain.*

Of all the chapters in the history of the Inquisition, the most tragical is the record of its work in Spain, for there a whole nation's faculty of freethought was by its ministry strangled for a whole era. There is a prevalent notion that in Spain fanaticism had mastered the national life from the period of the overthrow of Arianism under the later Visigothic kings; and that there the extirpation of heresy was the spontaneous and congenial work of the bulk of the nation, giving vent to the spirit of intolerance ingrained in it in the long war with the Moors. "Spain," says Michelet, "has always felt herself more Catholic than Rome."³ But this is a serious misconception. Wars associated with a religious cause are usually followed rather by indifference than by increased faith; and the long wars of the Moors and the Christians in Spain had some such sequel,⁴ as had the

¹ Lea, p. 125.

² As to the external movements connected with Joachim's *Gospel*, see Mosheim, 13 Cent., Pt. ii, ch. v, §§ 13-15. They were put down by sheer bloodshed. Cp. Ueberweg, i, 431; Lea, pp. 25-6, 86.

³ *Hist. de France*, vol. x, *La Réforme*, ed. 1884, p. 333.

⁴ See the present writer's notes to his ed. of Buckle, 1904, pp. 539, 547.

Crusades, and the later wars of religion in France and Germany. It is true that for a century after the (political) conversion of the Visigothic king Recared (587) from Arianism to Catholicism—an age of complete decadence—the policy of the Spanish church was extremely intolerant, as might have been expected. The Jews, in particular, were repeatedly and murderously persecuted;¹ but after the fall of the Visigoths before the invading Moors, the treatment of all forms of heresy in the Christian parts of the Peninsula, down to the establishment of the second or New Inquisition under Torquemada, was in general rather less severe than elsewhere.²

An exception is to be noted in the case of the edicts of 1194 and 1197, by Alfonso II and Pedro II ("the Catholic") of Aragon, against the Waldenses.³ The policy in the first case was that of wholesale expulsion of the heretics anathematised by the church; and, as this laid the victims open to plunder all round, there is a presumption that cupidity was a main part of the motive. Peter the Catholic, in turn, who decreed the stake for the heretics that remained, made a signally complete capitulation to the Holy See; but the nation did not support him; and the tribute he promised to pay to the Pope was never paid.⁴ In the thirteenth century, when the Moors had been driven out of Castile, rationalistic heresy seems to have been as common in Spain as in Italy. Already Arab culture had spread, Archbishop Raymond of Toledo (1130–50) having caused many books to be translated from Arabic into Latin;⁵ and inasmuch as racial warfare had always involved some intercourse between Christians and Moors,⁶ the Averroïst influence which so speedily

¹ U. R. Burke, *History of Spain*, Hume's ed. i, 109–110.

² McCrie, *Hist. of the Reformation in Spain*, ed. 1856, p. 41; Burke, as cited, ii, 55–56.

³ Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, i, 81.

⁴ Burke, i, 218.

⁵ Hauréau, *Hist. de la philos. scolastique*, ii, 54–5.

⁶ *Id.* ii, 58.

reached Sicily from Toledo through Michael Scot must have counted for something in Spain. About 1260 Alfonso X, "the Wise" king of Castile, describes the heresies of his kingdom under two main divisions, of which the worse is the denial of a future state of rewards and punishments.¹ This heresy, further, is proceeded against by the Council of Tarragona in 1291. And though Alfonso was orthodox, and in his legislation a persecutor,² his own astronomic and mathematical science, so famous in the after times, came to him from the Arabs and the Jews whom he actually called in to assist him in preparing his astronomic tables.³ Such science was itself a species of heresy in that age; and to it the orthodox king owes his Catholic reputation as a blasphemer, as Antichrist,⁴ and as one of the countless authors of the fabulous treatise on the "Three Impostors." He would further rank as a bad churchman inasmuch as his very laws against heresy took no account of the Roman Inquisition (though it was nominally established by a papal rescript in 1235),⁵ but provided independently for the treatment of offenders. Needless to say, they had due regard to finance, *non-believers* who listened to heresy being fined ten pounds weight of gold, with the alternative of fifty lashes in public; while the property of lay heretics without kin went to the fisc.⁶ The law condemning to the stake those Christians who apostatised to Islam or Judaism⁷ had also a financial motive.

Such laws, however, left to unsystematic application, were but slightly operative; and the people fiercely resisted what attempts were made to enforce them.⁸ At the end of the thirteenth century the heresies of the French Beguines and the Franciscan "Spirituals" spread in Aragon, both by way of books and of

¹ Lea, iii, 560.

² Personally he discouraged heresy-hunting. Burke, ii, 66.

³ Burke, i, 268-273; Dunham, *Hist. of Spain and Portugal*, 1832, iv, 260.

⁴ Lea, iii, 24.

⁵ Burke, ii, 65.

⁶ Lea, ii, 183.

⁷ *Id.* i, 221.

⁸ Burke, ii, 66-67.

preaching, and even entered Portugal. Against these, in the years 1314-1335, the Inquisitors maintained a persecution.¹ But it has been put on record by the famous Arnaldo of Villanueva—astronomer, scholar, alchemist, reformer, and occultist² (d. 1314)—whose books were at that period condemned by a council of friars because of his championship of the Spirituals, that King Frederick II of Aragon had confessed to him his doubts as to the truth of the Christian religion—doubts set up by the misconduct of priests, abbots, and bishops; the malignities of the heads of the friar orders; and the worldliness and political intrigues of the Holy See.³ Such a king was not likely to be a zealous inquisitor; and the famous Joachite Franciscan Juan de Pera-Tallada (Jean de la Rochetaillade), imprisoned at Avignon for his apocalyptic teachings about 1349, seems to have died in peace in Spain long afterwards.⁴ It cannot even be said that the ordinary motive of rapacity worked strongly against heresy in Spain in the Middle Ages, since there the Templars, condemned and plundered everywhere else, were acquitted; and their final spoliation was the work of the Papacy, the Spanish authorities resisting.⁵ We have seen, too, how the orthodox Spanish king of Naples in the fifteenth century protected anti-papal scholarship. And though Dominic, the primary type of the Inquisitor, had been a Castilian, no Spaniard was Pope from the fourth to the fourteenth century, and very few were cardinals.⁶

As late as the latter half of the fifteenth century, within a generation of the setting-up of the murderous New Inquisition, Spain seems to have been on the whole as much given to freethinking as France, and much more so than England. On the one hand, Averroïsm tinged somewhat the intellectual life through the Moorish environment, so that in 1464 we find revolted nobles

¹ Lea, iii, 85-86.

² *Id.* pp. 52-53; McCrie, *Reformation in Spain*, ed. 1856, p. 20.

³ Bonet-Maury, *Les Précurseurs de la Réforme*, 1904, pp. 114-119.

⁴ Lea, iii, 86.

⁵ Burke, ii, 57.

⁶ *Id.* ii, 62-63.

complaining that King Enrique IV is suspected of being unsound in the faith because he has about him both enemies of Catholicism and nominal Christians who avow their disbelief in a future state.¹ A few years earlier it had been noted that many were beginning to deny the need or efficacy of priestly confession ; and about 1478 a Professor at Salamanca, Pedro de Osma, actually printed an argument to that effect, further challenging the power of the Pope. So slight was then the machinery of inquisition that he had to be publicly tried by a council, which merely ordered him to recant in public ; and he died peacefully in 1480.²

It was immediately after this, in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, that the Inquisition was newly and effectively established in Spain ; and the determining motive was the avarice of the king and queen, not the Catholic zeal of the people. The Inquisitor-General of Messina came to Madrid in 1477 in order to obtain confirmation of a forged privilege, pretended to have been granted to the Dominicans in Sicily by Frederick II in 1233—that of receiving one-third of the property of every heretic they condemned. To such a ruler as Ferdinand, such a system readily appealed ; and as soon as possible a new Inquisition was established in Spain, Isabella consenting.³ From the first it was a system of plunder. “ Men long dead, if they were represented by rich descendants, were cited before the tribunal, judged, and condemned ; and the lands and goods that had descended to their heirs passed into the coffers of the Catholic kings.”⁴ The solemn assertion by Queen Isabella, that she had never applied such money to the purposes of the crown, has been proved from State papers to be “ a most deliberate and daring falsehood.”⁵ The revenue thus iniquitously obtained was enormous ; and it is inferrible that the pecuniary motive underlay the later expulsion

¹ Lea, iii, 564.

² *Id.* ii, 187–8.

³ Lea, ii, 287 ; Burke, ii, 67–69.

⁴ Burke, ii, 77, citing Lafuente, ix, 233.

⁵ *Id.* citing Bergenroth, *Calendar*, etc., i, 37.

of the Jews and the Moriscos as well as the average practice of the Inquisition.

The error as to the original or anciently ingrained fanaticism of the Spanish people, first made current by Ticknor (*Hist. Spanish Lit.* 6th ed. i, 505) has been to some extent diffused by Buckle, who at this point of his inquiry reasoned *à priori* instead of inductively as his own principles prescribed. See the notes to the present writer's edition of his *Introduction* (Routledge, 1904), pp. 107, 534-550. The special atrocity of the Inquisition in Spain was not even due directly to the papacy (cp. Burke, ii, 78): it was the result first of the rapacity of Ferdinand, utilising a papal institution; and later of the *political* fanaticisms of Charles V and Philip II, both of Teutonic as well as Spanish descent. Philip alleged that the Inquisition in the Netherlands was more severe than in Spain (ed. of Buckle cited, p. 107, *note*). In the words of Bishop Stubbs: "To a German race of sovereigns Spain finally owed the subversion of her national system and ancient freedom" (*Id.* p. 550, *note*).

Such a process, however, would not have been possible in any country, at any stage of the world's history, without the initiative and the support of some such sacrosanct organisation as the Catholic Church, wielding a spell over the minds even of those who, in terror and despair, fought against it. As in the thirteenth century, so at the end of the fifteenth,¹ the Inquisition in Spain was spasmodically resisted in Aragon and Castile, in Catalonia, and in Valencia; the first Inquisitor-General in Aragon being actually slain in the cathedral of Saragossa in 1487, despite his precaution of wearing a steel cap and coat of mail.² Vigorous protests from the Cortès even forced some restraint upon the entire machine; but such occasional resistance could not long countervail the steady pressure of regal and official avarice and the systematic fanaticism of the Dominican order.

It was thus the fate of Spain to illustrate once for all the power of a dogmatic religious system to extirpate the

¹ Even as late as 1591, in Aragon, when in a riot against the Inquisition the Inquisitors barely escaped with their lives. Burke, ii, 80, *note*.

² *Id.* pp. 81-82.

spirit of reason from an entire nation for a whole era. There and there only, save for a time in Italy, did the Inquisition become all-powerful ; and it wrought for the evisceration of the intellectual and material life of Spain with a demented zeal to which there is no parallel in later history. In the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, after several random massacres and much persecution of the "New Christians" or doubtful converts from Judaism,¹ the unconverted Jews of Spain were in 1489 penned into Ghettos, and were in 1492 expelled bodily from the country, with every circumstance of cruelty, so far as Church and State could compass their plans. By this measure at least 160,000 subjects² of more than average value were lost to the State. Portugal and other Christian countries took the same cruel step a few years later ; but Spain carried the policy much further. From the year of its establishment, the Inquisition was hotly at work destroying heresy of every kind ; and the renowned Torquemada, the confessor of Isabella, is credited with having burned over ten thousand persons in his eighteen years of office as Grand Inquisitor, besides torturing many thousands. Close upon a hundred thousand more were terrified into submission ; and a further six thousand burned in effigy in their absence or after death.³ The destruction of books was proportionally thorough ;⁴ and when Lutheran Protestantism arose it was persistently killed out ; thousands leaving the country in view of the hopelessness of the cause.⁵ At this rate,

¹ There had previously been sharp social persecution by the Cortès, in 1480, on "anti-Semitic" grounds, the Jews being then debarred from all the professions, and even from commerce. They were thus driven to usury by Christians, who latterly denounce the race for usuriousness. Cp. Michelet, *Hist. de France*, x, ed. 1884, p. 15, *note*.

² The number has been put as high as 800,000. Cp. F. D. Mocatta, *The Jews and the Inquisition*, 1877, p. 54 ; E. La Rigaudière, *Hist. des Perséc. Relig. en Espagne*, 1860, pp. 112-114 ; Prescott, *Hist. of Ferdinand and Isabella*, Kirk's ed. 1889, p. 323 ; and refs. in the present writer's ed. of Buckle, p. 541.

³ Llorente, *Hist. Crit. de l'Inquis. en Espagne*, ed. 1818, i, 280. As to Llorente's other estimates, which are of doubtful value, cp. Prescott's *note*, ed. cited, p. 746. As to Llorente's general credit, see the vindication of U. R. Burke, ii, 85-87.

⁴ Llorente, i, 281.

⁵ McCrie, *Reformation in Spain*, ch. viii.

every vestige of independent thought must soon have disappeared from any nation in the world. If she is to be judged by the number of her slain and exiled heretics, Spain must have been nearly as fecund in reformatory and innovating thought as any State in northern Europe; but the fatal conjunction of the royal and the clerical authority sufficed for a whole era to denude her of every variety of the freethinking species.¹

§ 4. *Thought in England.*

Lying on the outskirts of the world of culture, England in the period of the Italian Renaissance lived intellectually, even where ministered to by the genius of Chaucer, for the most part in dependence on Continental impulses; yet not without notable outcrops of native energy. There is indeed no more remarkable figure in the Middle Ages than ROGER BACON (? 1214–1294), the English Franciscan friar, schooled at Paris. For his insistence on the possibilities of science as he understood them—and doubtless also for his contempt of the superstitions of his Order—he underwent two long imprisonments at the hands of his superiors, the first lasting ten years; and ten years after he had sent his great work to Pope Clement IV at that ruler's request, Pope Nicholas (Jerome of Ascoli, himself a Franciscan) condemned it as *continentem aliquas novitates suspectas*.² And it is not surprising that, even as his Franciscan predecessor Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, came to be reputed a sorcerer on the strength of having written many treatises on scientific questions—as well as on witchcraft—Roger Bacon became a wizard in popular legend, and a scandal in the eyes of his immediate superiors, for a zest of secular curiosity no less uncommon and unpriestlike.³ “It is sometimes impossible

¹ Cp. La Rigaudière, pp. 309–314; Buckle, as cited, pp. 544, 570; U. R. Burke, i, 59, 85.

² See the suppl. vol. of Dr. Bridges' ed. of the *Opus Majus*, 1900, p. 158.

³ See the sympathetic accounts of Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.*, 1834, pp. 109–112; White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, i, 379–391.

to avoid smiling," says one philosophic historian of him, "when one sees how artfully this personified thirst for knowledge seeks to persuade himself, or his readers, that knowledge interests him only for ecclesiastical ends. No one has believed it: neither posteritynor his contemporaries, who distrusted him as worldly-minded."¹

Worldly-minded he was in a noble sense, as seeking to know the world of Nature; and perhaps the most remarkable proof of his originality on this side is his acceptance of the theory of the earth's sphericity. Peter de Alliaco, whose *Imago Mundi* was compiled in 1410, transcribed from Roger Bacon's *Opus Majus* almost literally, but without acknowledgment, a passage containing quotations from Aristotle, Pliny, and Seneca, all arguing for the possibility of reaching India by sailing westward. Columbus, it is known, was familiar with the *Imago Mundi*; and this passage seems greatly to have inspired him in his task.² This alone was sufficient practical heresy to put Bacon in danger; and yet his real orthodoxy can hardly be doubted. He always protested against the scholastic doctrine of a "twofold truth," insisting that revelation and philosophy were at one, but that the latter also was divine. It probably mattered little to his superiors, however, what view he took of the abstract question: it was his zeal for concrete knowledge that they detested. His works remain to show the scientific reach of which his age was capable, when helped by the lore of the Arabs; for he seems to have drawn from Averroës some of his

¹ Erdmann, *History of Philosophy*, Eng. trans. 3rd ed. i, 476.

² Humboldt, *Examen Crit. de l'hist. de la Géographie*, 1836-39, i, 64-70, gives the passages in the *Opus Majus* and the *Imago Mundi*, and paraphrase of the latter in Columbus's letter to Ferdinand and Isabella from Jamaica (given also in P. L. Ford's *Writings of Christopher Columbus*, 1892, p. 199 sq.). Cp. Ellis's note to Francis Bacon's *Temporis Partus Masculus*, in Ellis and Spedding's ed. of Bacon's *Works*, iii, 534. It should be remembered in this connection that Columbus found believers, in the early stage of his undertaking, only in two friars, one a Franciscan and one a Dominican. See Ford's ed. of the *Writings*, p. 107.

inspiration to research ;¹ but in the England of that day his ideals of research were as unattainable as his wrath against clerical obstruction was powerless ;² and Averroism in England made little for innovation.³ The English Renaissance properly sets-in in the sixteenth century, when the glory of that of Italy is passing away.

In the fourteenth century, indeed, a remarkable new life is seen arising in England in the poetry of Chaucer, from contact with the literature of Italy and France ; but while Chaucer reflects the spontaneous medieval hostility to the self-seeking and fraudulent clergy, he tells little of the Renaissance spirit of unbelief, save when he notes the proverbial irreligion of the physicians,⁴ and smiles significantly over the problem of the potency of clerical cursing and absolution.⁵ In such matters he is distinctly un-devout ; but he is no propagandist, and after his day there is social retrogression and literary relapse in England for two centuries. That there was some practical rationalism in his day, however, we gather from the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, by the contemporary poet Langland (fl. 1360-90), where there is a vivid account of the habit among anti-clerical laymen of arguing against the doctrine of original sin and the entailment of Adam's offence on the whole human race.⁶ The church had in fact visibly turned this dogma to its own ends, insisting on the universal need of ghostly help even as it repelled the doctrine of unalterable predestination. In both cases, of course, the matter

¹ Renan, *Averroës*, p. 263. Bacon mentions Averroës in the *Opus Majus*, Pt. i, cc. 6, 15 ; Pt. ii, c. 13 ; ed. Bridges, iii (1900), 14, 33, 67. In the passage last cited he calls him "homo solidæ sapientiae, corrigens multa priorum et addens multa, quamvis corrigendus sit in aliquibus, et in multis complendus."

² See the careful notice by Professor Adamson in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* Cp. Milman, *Latin Christianity*, ix, 152-160 ; Lewes, *History of Philosophy*, ii, 77-87.

³ Two Englishmen, the Carmelite John of Baconthorpe (d. 1346) and Walter Burleigh, were among the orthodox Averroists ; the latter figuring as a Realist against William of Occam.

⁴ *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, 438 (440).

⁵ *Id.* 653-661 (655-663).

⁶ *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, vv. 5809 sq. Wright's ed., *Lib. of Old Authors*, pp. 179-180.

was settled by scripture and authority ; and Langland's reply to the heretics is mere angry dogmatism.

There flourished, further, a remarkable amount of heresy of the species seen in Provence and Northern Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, such sectaries being known in England under the generic name of "Lollards," derived from the Flemish, in which it seems to have signified singers of hymns.¹ Lollards or "Beghards," starting from the southern point of propagation, spread all over civilised Northern Europe, meeting everywhere persecution alike from the regular priests and the mendicant monks ; and in England as elsewhere their anti-clericalism and their heresy were correlative. In the formal Lollard petition to Parliament in 1395, however, there is evident an amount of innovating opinion which implies more than the mere stimulus of financial pressure. Not only the Papal authority, monasteries, clerical celibacy, nuns' vows, transubstantiation, exorcisms, bought blessings, pilgrimages, prayers for the dead, offerings to images, confessions and absolutions, but war and capital punishment and "unnecessary trades," such as those of goldsmiths and armourers, are condemned by those early Utopists.² In what proportion they really thought out the issues they dealt with we can hardly ascertain ; but a chronicler of Wiclif's time, living at Leicester, testifies that you could not meet two men in the street but one was a Lollard.³ The movement substantially came to nothing, suffering murderous persecution in the person of Oldcastle (Lord Cobham) and others, and disappearing in the fifteenth century in the ruin of the civil wars ; but apart from Chaucer's poetry it is more significant of Renaissance influences in England than almost any other phenomenon down to the reign of Henry VIII.

¹ Mosheim, 14 Cent. Pt. ii, ch. ii, § 36, and *note*. Cp. Green, *Short History of the English People*, ch. v, § 3, ed. 1881, p. 235.

² Cp. Green, *Short History*, ch. v, § 5, p. 253 ; Massingberd, *The English Reformation*, 4th ed. p. 171.

³ Cited by Lechler, *John Wycliffe and his English Precursors*. Eng. trans. 1-vol. ed. p. 440.

In the powerful Wiclif, again, we see rather a superior mind of the Middle Ages, scholastically nourished, than a man of the Renaissance. It is still doubtful whence he derived his marked Protestantism as to some Catholic dogmas ; but it would seem that he too may have been reached by the older Paulician or other southern heresy.¹ As early as 1286 a form of heresy approaching the Albigensian and the Waldensian is found in the province of Canterbury, certain persons there maintaining that Christians were not bound by the authority of the Pope and the Fathers, but solely by that of the Bible and "necessary reason."² It is true that he never refers to the Waldenses or Albigenses, or any of the continental reformers of his day, though he often cites his English predecessor, Bishop Grosteste ;³ but this may have been on grounds of policy. To cite heretics could do no good ; to cite a bishop was helpful. The main reason for doubting a foreign influence in his case is that to the last he held by purgatory and absolute predestination.⁴ In any case, Wiclif's practical and moral resentment of ecclesiastical abuses was the main-spring of his doctrine ; and his heresies as to transubstantiation and other articles of faith can be seen to connect with his anti-priestly attitude. He, however, was morally disinterested as compared with the would-be plunderers who formed the bulk of the anti-church party of John of Gaunt ; and his failure to effect any reformation was due to the fact that on one hand there was not intelligence enough in the nation to respond to his doctrinal common sense, while on the other he could not so separate ecclesiastical from feudal tyranny and extortion as to set up a political movement which should strike at clerical evils without inciting some to impeach

¹ Cp. Professor Montagu Burrows, *Wiclif's Place in History*, ed. 1884, p. 49. Maitland (*Eight Essays*, 1852) suggested derivation from the movement of Abbot Joachim and others of that period.

² Wilkins' *Concilia*, ii, 124.

³ Cp. Vaughan, as cited by Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, p. 402.

⁴ Hardwick, pp. 417, 418. The doctrine of purgatory was, however, soon renounced by the Lollards (*Id.* p. 420).

the nobility who held the balance of political power. Charged with setting vassals against tyrant lords, he was forced to plead that he taught the reverse, though he justified the withholding of tithes from bad curates.¹ The revolt led by John Ball in 1381, which was in no way promoted by Wiclif,² showed that the country people suffered as much from lay as from clerical oppression.

The time, in short, was one of extreme ferment, and not only were there other reformers who went much farther than Wiclif in the matter of social reconstruction,³ but we know from his writings that there were heretics who carried their criticism as far as to challenge the authority and credibility of the Scriptures. Against these *accusatores* and *inimici Scripturae* he repeatedly speaks in his treatise *De veritate Scripturae Sacrae*,⁴ which is thus one of the very earliest works in defence of Christianity against modern criticism.⁵ His position, however, is almost wholly medieval. One qualification should perhaps be made, in respect of his occasional resort to reason where it was least to be expected, as on the question of restrictions on marriage.⁶ But on such points he wavered; and otherwise he is merely scripturalist. The infinite superiority of Christ to all other men, and Christ's virtual authorship of the entire Scriptures, are his premisses—a way of begging the question so simple-minded that it is clear the other side was not heard in reply, though these arguments had formed part of his theological lectures,⁷ and so

¹ See the passages cited in Lewis's *Life of Wiclif*, ed. 1820, pp. 224-5. Cp. Burrows, as cited, p. 19; Le Bas, *Life of Wiclif*, 1832, pp. 357-9.

² See Lechler's *John Wycliffe and his English Precursors*, pp. 371-6; Hardwick, p. 412.

³ Cp. Green, *Short History*, ch. v, § 4.

⁴ Lechler, as cited, p. 236. This treatise forms the sixth book of Wiclif's theological *Summa*.

⁵ Baxter, in his address "To the doubting and unbelieving readers" prefixed to his *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, 1667, names Savonarola, Campanella, Ficinus, Vives, Mornay, Grotius, Cameron, and Micraelius as defenders of the faith, but no writer of the fourteenth century.

⁶ Cp. Le Bas, pp. 342-3; and Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, 1853, p. 415.

⁷ Lechler, p. 236.

pre-supposed a real opposition. Wiclif was in short a typical Protestant in his unquestioning acceptance of the Bible as a supernatural authority; and when his demand for the publication of the Bible in English was met by "worldly clerks" with the cry that it would "set Christians in debate, and subjects to rebel against their sovereigns," he could only protest that they "openly slander God, the author of peace, and his holy law."¹ Later English history proved that the worldly clerks were perfectly right, and Wiclif the erring optimist of faith. For the rest, his essentially dogmatic view of religion did nothing to counteract the spirit of persecution; and the passing of the Statute for the Burning of Heretics in 1401, with the ready consent of both Houses of Parliament, constituted the due dogmatic answer to dogmatic criticism. Yet within three years the Commons were proposing to confiscate the revenues of the higher clergy: so far was anti-clericalism from implying heterodoxy.

Of a very different type from Wiclif is the remarkable personality of the Welshman REGINALD (or REYNOLD) PECOCK (1395?-1460?), who seems divided from Wiclif by a whole era of intellectual development, though born within about ten years of his death. It is a singular fact that one of the most rationalistic minds among the serious writers of the fifteenth century should be an English bishop,² and an Ultramontane at that. Pecock was an opponent at once of popular Bibliolatry and of priestly persecution, declaring that "the clergy would be condemned at the last day if they did not draw men into consent to the true faith otherwise than by fire and sword and hanging."³ It was as the rational and temperate defender of the church against the attacks of the Lollards in general that he formulated the principle of natural reason as against scripturalism. This attitude

¹ Lechler, p. 213.

² Cp. the appreciation by Professor Thorold Rogers, *Economic Interpretation of History*, p. 83.

³ In 1387 the Lollards were denounced under that name by the Bishop of Worcester as "eternally damned sons of Antichrist."

it is that makes his treatise, the *Repressor of overmuch Blaming of the Clergy*, the most modern of theoretic English books before More and Hooker and Bacon. That he was led to this measure of rationalism rather by the exigencies of his papalism than by a spontaneous skepticism is suggested by the fact that he stands for the acceptance of miraculous images, shrines, and relics, when the Lollards are attacking them.¹ On the other hand, it is hard to be certain that his belief in the shrines was genuine, so ill does it consist with his attitude to Bibliolatry. In a series of serenely argued points he urges his thesis that the Bible is not the basis of the moral law, but merely an illustration thereof, and that the natural reason is obviously presupposed in the bulk of its teaching. He starts from the formulas of Thomas Aquinas, but reaches a higher ground. It is the position of Hooker, anticipated by a hundred years ; and this in an age of such intellectual backwardness and literary decadence that the earlier man must be pronounced by far the more remarkable figure. In such a case the full influence of the Renaissance seems to be at work ; though in the obscurity of the records we can do no more than conjecture that the new contacts with French culture between the invasion of France by Henry V in 1415 and the expulsion of the English in 1451 may have introduced forces of thought unknown or little known before. If indeed there were English opponents of scripture in Wiclif's day, the idea must have ripened somewhat in Pecock's. Whether, however, the victories of Jeanne D'Arc made some unbelievers as well as many dastards among the English is a problem that does not seem to have been investigated.

Pecock's reply to the Lollards creates the curious situation of a churchman rebutting heretics by being more profoundly heretical than they. In his system, the Scriptures "reveal" only supernatural truths not otherwise attainable, a way of safeguarding dogma not likely

¹ See the *Repressor*, Babington's ed. in the Rolls Series, 1860, Part ii.

to reassure believers. There is reason, indeed, to suspect that Pecock held no dogma with much zeal; and when in his well-named treatise (now lost), *The Provoker*, he denied the authenticity of the Apostles' Creed, "he alienated every section of theological opinion in England."

See Miss A. M. Cooke's art. REGINALD PECOCK in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* This valuable notice is the best short account of Pecock; though the nature of his case is most fully made out by Hook, as cited below. It is characteristic of the restricted fashion in which history is still treated that neither in the *Student's History* of Professor Gardiner nor in the *Short History* of Green is Pecock mentioned. Earlier ideas concerning him were far astray. The notion of Foxe, the martyrologist, that Pecock was an early Protestant, is a gross error. He held not a single Protestant tenet, being a rationalising papist. A German ecclesiastical historian of the 18th century (Werner, *Kirchengeschichte des 18ten Jahrhunderts*, 1756, cited by Lechler) calls Pecock the first English deist. See a general view of his opinions in Lewis's *Life of Dr. Reynold Pecock* (rep. 1820), ch. v. The heresies charged on him are given on p. 160; also in the R. T. S. *Writings and Examinations*, 1831, pp. 200-1. While rejecting Bibliolatry, he yet argued that Popes and Councils could make no change in the current creed; and he thus offended the High Churchmen. Cp. Massingberd, *The English Reformation*, 4th ed. pp. 206-9.

The main causes of the hostility he met from the English hierarchy and Government appear to have been, on the one hand, his change of political party, which put him in opposition to Archbishop Bouchier, and on the other his zealous championship of the authority of the papacy as against that of the Councils of the church. It was expressly on the score of his denunciation of the Councils that he was tried and condemned.¹ Thus the reward of his effort to reason down the menacing Lollards and rebut Wiclif² was his formal disgrace and virtual imprisonment. Had he not

¹ Hook, *Lives of the Archbishops* (Life of Bouchier), 1867, v, 294-306.

² He repels, e.g., Wiclif's argument that a priest's misconduct sufficed to destroy his right to his endowments. *Repressor*, Babington's ed. as cited, ii, 413.

recanted, he would have been burned: as it was, his books were; and it is on record that they consisted of eleven quartos and three folios of manuscript. Either because of his papalism or as a result of official intrigue, church and lords and commons were of one mind against him; and the mob would fain have burned him with his books.¹ In that age of brutal strife, when "neither the church nor the opponents of the church had any longer a sway over men's hearts,"² he figures beside the mindless prelates and their lay peers somewhat as does More later beside Henry VIII, as Reason *versus* the Beast; and it was illustrative of his entire lack of fanaticism that he made the demanded retractations—avowing his sin in "trusting to natural reason" rather than to Scripture and the authority of the church—and went his way in silence to solitude and death. The ruling powers disposed of Lollardism in their own way; and in the Wars of the Roses every species of heretical thought seems to disappear. The bribe held out to the nation by the invasion of France had been fatally effectual to corrupt the spirit of moral criticism which inspired the Lollard movement at its best; and the subsequent period of rapine and strife reduced thought and culture to the levels of the Middle Ages.

§ 5. *Thought in France.*

As regards France, the record of intellectual history between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries is hardly less scanty than as regards England. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the intellectual life of the French philosophic schools, as we saw, was more vigorous and expansive than that of any other country; so that, looking further to the Provençal literature and to the French beginnings of Gothic architecture, France might even be said to lead the Renaissance.³ In the

¹ Hook, as cited, v, 309.

² Gardiner, *Student's History*, p. 330. Cp. Greene, ch. vi, § i, 2, pp. 267, 275; Stubbs, *Const. Hist.* iii, 631-3.

³ It is noteworthy that French culture affected the very vocabulary of Dante, as it did that of his teacher, Brunetto Latini. Cp. Littré,

latter part of the thirteenth century, too, as before noted, rationalism at the Paris university was frequently carried in private to a rejection of all the dogmas peculiar to Christianity. At that great school Roger Bacon seems to have acquired his encyclopædic learning and his critical habit; and there it was that in the first half of the fourteenth century William of Occam nourished his remarkable philosophic faculty. From about the middle of the fourteenth century, however, there is a relative arrest of French progress for some two centuries.¹ Three main conditions served to check intellectual advance: the civil wars which involved the loss of the communal liberties which had been established in France between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries;² the exhaustion of the nation by the English invasion under Edward III; the repressive power of the church; and the general devotion of the national energies to war. After the partial recovery from the ruinous English invasion under Edward III, civil strifes and feudal tyranny wrought new impoverishment, making possible the still more destructive invasion under Henry V; so that in the first half of the fifteenth century France was hardly more civilised than England.³ It is from the French invasion of Italy under Charles VIII that the enduring renaissance in France broadly dates. Earlier impulses had likewise come from Italy: Lanfranc, Anselm, Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and others of lesser note,⁴ had gone from Italy to teach in France or England; but it needed the full

Études sur les barbares et le moyen âge, 3e édit. pp. 399-400. The influence of French literature is further seen in Boccaccio, and in Italian literature in general from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. Gebhart, pp. 209-221.

¹ Duruy, *Hist. de France*, ed. 1880, i, 440-1; Gebhart, *Orig. de la Renais. en Italie*, pp. 2, 19, 24-29, 32-35, 41-50; Le Clerc and Renan, *Hist. Litt. de la France au XIVe Siècle*, i, 4; ii, 123; Littré, *Études*, as cited, pp. 424-9.

² Duruy, ii, 409 sq., 449; Gebhart, pp. 35-41; Morin, *Origines de la Démocratie: La France au Moyen Âge*, 3e édit. 1865, p. 304 sq.

³ Cp. Michelet, *Hist. de France*, vii, *Renaissance*, Introd. § ii. Between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries, he insists, "le jour baisse horriblement."

⁴ Ozanam, *Dante*, 6e édit. pp. 47, 78, 108-110.

contact of Italian civilisation to raise monarchic France to the stage of general and independent intellectual life.

During the period in question, there had been established the following universities: Paris, 1200; Toulouse, 1220; Montpellier, 1289; Avignon, 1303; Orléans, 1312; Cahors, 1332; Angers, 1337; Orange, 1367; Dôle, 1422; Poitiers, 1431; Caen, 1436; Valence, 1454; Nantes, 1460; Bourges, 1463; Bordeaux, 1472 (Desmazes, *L'Université de Paris*, 1876, p. 2. Other dates for some of these are given on p. 31). But the militarist conditions prevented any sufficient development of such opportunities. In the fourteenth century, says Littré (*Études sur les barbares et le moyen âge*, p. 419), "the university of Paris.....was more powerful than at any other epoch..... Never did she exercise such a power over men's minds." But he also decides that in that epoch the first florescence of French literature withered away (p. 387). The long location of the anti-Papacy at Avignon (1305-1376) doubtless counted for something in French culture (V. Le Clerc, *Hist. Litt. de la France au XIV^e siècle*, i, 37; Gebhart, pp. 221-6); but the devastation wrought by the English invasion was sufficient to countervail that and more. See the account of it by Petrarch (letter of the year 1360) cited by Littré, *Études*, pp. 416-7; and by Hallam, *Middle Ages*, i, 59, note. Cp. Michelet, *Hist. de France*, vi, ch. 3; Dunton, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 1888, pp. 79-84. As to the consequences of the English invasion of the fifteenth century see Martin, *Hist. de France*, 4^e édit. vi, 132-133; Sismondi, *Hist. des Français*, 1831, xii, 582; Hallam, *Middle Ages*, i, 83-87.

In northern France of the fourteenth century, as in Provence and Italy and England, there was a manifold stir of innovation and heresy: there as elsewhere the insubordinate Franciscans, with their *Eternal Gospel*, the Paterini, the Beghards, fought their way against the Dominican Inquisition. But the Inquisitors burned books as well as men; and much anti-ecclesiastical poetry, some dating even from the Carolingian era, shared the fate of many copies of the Talmud, translations of the Bible, and, a fortiori, every species of heretical writing. In effect, the Inquisition for the time "extinguished freethought"¹ in France. As in England,

¹ Littré, as cited, pp. 411-413.

the ferment of heresy was mixed with one of democracy; and in the French popular poetry of the time there are direct parallels to the contemporary English couplet, "When Adam delved and Eve span, Where was then the gentleman?"¹ Such a spirit could no more prosper in feudal France than in feudal England; and when France emerged from her mortal struggle with the English, to be effectively solidified by Louis XI, there was left in her life little of the spirit of free inquiry. It has been noted that whereas the chronicler Joinville, in the thirteenth century, is full of religious feeling, Froissart, in the fourteenth, priest as he is, exhibits hardly any; and again Comines, in the fifteenth, reverts to the orthodoxy of the twelfth and thirteenth.² The middle period was one of indifference, following on the killing out of heresy:³ the fifteenth century is a resumption of the Middle Ages, and Comines has the medieval cast of mind,⁴ although of a superior order. There seems to be no community of thought between him and his younger Italian contemporaries, Machiavelli and Guicciardini; though, "even while Comines was writing, there were unequivocal symptoms of a great and decisive change."⁵

The special development in France of the spirit of "chivalry" had joined the normal uncivilising influence of militarism with that of clericalism; the various knightly orders, as well as knighthood pure and simple, being all under ecclesiastical sanctions, and more or less strictly vowed to "defend the church,"⁶ while supremely

¹ Le Clerc, as cited, p. 259; Gebhart, pp. 48-9.

² Sir James F. Stephen, *Hora Sabbatica*, 1892, i, 42.

³ The Italians said of the French Pope Clement VI (1342-52) that he had small religion. M. Villani, *Cronica*, iii, 43 (ed. 1554).

⁴ Cp. Dr. T. Arnold, *Lectures on Modern History*, 4th ed. pp. 111-118; Buckle, 3-vol. ed. i, 326-7 (1-vol. ed. p. 185); Sir J. F. Stephen, *Hora Sabbatica*, i, 121. "It is hardly too much to say that Comines's whole mind was haunted at all times and at every point by a belief in an invisible and immensely powerful and artful man whom he called God" (Stephen, as cited).

⁵ Buckle, i, 329 (1-vol. ed. p. 186).

⁶ Buckle, ii, 133 (1-vol. ed. p. 361); Hallam, *Middle Ages*, iii, 395-6. Religious ceremonies were attached to the initiation of knights in the 13th century. Seignobos, *Hist. de la Civilisation*, ii, 15.

incompetent to form an intelligent opinion. It is the more remarkable that in the case of one of the crusading orders heresy of the most blasphemous kind was finally charged against the entire organisation, and that it was on that ground annihilated (1311). It remains incredible, however, that the order of the Templars can have systematically practised the extravagances or held the tenets laid to their charge. They had of course abused their power and departed from their principles like every other religious order enabled to amass wealth; and the hostility theirs aroused is perfectly intelligible from what is known of the arrogance of its members and the general ruffianism of the Crusaders. Their wealth alone goes far to explain the success of their enemies against them; for, though the numbers of the order were much smaller than tradition gives out, its possessions were considerable. These were the true ground of the French king's attack.¹ But that its members were as a rule either Cathari or anti-Christians, either disguised Moslems or deists, or that they practised obscenity by rule, there is no reason to believe. What seems to have happened was a resort by some unbelieving members to more or less gross burlesque of the mysteries of initiation—a phenomenon paralleled in ancient Greece and in the modern Catholic world, and implying rather hardy irreligion than any reasoned heresy whatever.

The long-continued dispute as to the guilt of the Knights Templars is still chronically re-opened. Hallam, after long hesitation, came finally to believe them guilty, partly on the strength of the admissions made by Michelet in defending them (*Europe in the Middle Ages*, 11th ed, i, 138–142—note of 1848). He attaches, however, a surprising weight to the obviously weak “architectural evidence” cited by Hammer-Purgstall. Heeren (*Essai sur l'influence des croisades*, 1808, pp. 221–2) takes a more judicial view. The excellent summing

¹ Duruy, i, 368, 373–4. Cp. J. Jolly, *Philippe le Bel*, 1869, l. iii, ch. 4, p. 249. It is to be remembered that Philippe had for years been sorely pressed for money to retrieve his military disasters. See H. Hervieu, *Recherches sur les premiers états généraux*, 1879, pp. 89 sq., 99 sq. He used his ill-gotten gains to restore the currency, which he had debased. *Id.* pp. 101–2.

up of Mr. H. C. Lea (*History of the Inquisition*, B. iii, ch. 5, pp. 263-276) perhaps gives too little weight to the mass of curious confirmatory evidence cited by writers on the other side (e.g., F. Nicolai, *Versuch über die Beschuldigungen welche dem Tempelherrenorden gemacht worden*, 1782); but his conclusion as to the falsity of the charges against the order as a whole seems irresistible.

The solution that offensive practices occurred irregularly (Lea, pp. 276-7) is pointed to even by the earlier hostile writers (Nicolai, p. 17). It seems to be certain that the initiatory rites included the act of spitting on the crucifix—presumptively a symbolic display of absolute obedience to the orders of those in command (Jolly, *Philippe le Bel*, pp. 264-8). That there was no Catharism in the order seems certain (Lea, p. 249). The suggestion that the offensive and burlesque practices were due to the lower grade of "serving brethren," who were contemned by the higher, seems, however, without firm foundation. The courage for such freaks, and the disposition to commit them, were rather more likely to arise among the crusaders of the upper class, who could come in contact with Moslem-Christian unbelief through those of Sicily.

For the further theory that the "Freemasons" (at that period really cosmopolitan guilds of masons) were already given to freethinking, there is again no evidence. That they at times deliberately introduced obscene symbols into church architecture is no proof that they were collectively unbelievers in the church's doctrines; though it is likely enough that some of them were. Obscenity is the expression not of an intellectual but of a physical and unreasoning bias, and can perfectly well concur with religious feeling. The fact that the medieval masons did not confine obscene symbols to the churches they built for the Templars (Hallam, as cited, pp. 140-1) should serve to discredit alike the theory that the Templars were systematically anti-Christian, and the theory that the Freemasons were so. That for centuries the builders of the Christian churches throughout Europe formed an anti-Christian organisation is a grotesque hypothesis. At most they indulged in freaks of artistic satire on the lines of contemporary satirical literature, expressing an anti-clerical bias, with perhaps occasional elements of blasphemy. (See Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen*, cap. 252, note.) It could well be that there survived among the Freemasons various Gnostic ideas; since the architectural art itself came in a direct line from antiquity. Such heresy, too, might conceivably be winked at by the church, which depended so much on the heretics' services. But their obscenities were the mere expression of the

animal imagination and normal salacity of all ages. Only in modern times, and that only in Catholic countries, has the derivative organisation of Freemasonry been identified with freethought propaganda. In England in the seventeenth century the Freemasonic clubs—no longer connected with any trade—were thoroughly royalist and orthodox (Nicolai, pp. 196–8).

Some remarkable intellectual phenomena, however, do connect with the French university life of the first half of the fourteenth century. WILLIAM OF OCCAM (d. 1347), the English Franciscan, who taught at Paris, is on the whole the most rationalistic of medieval philosophers. Though a pupil of the Realist Duns Scotus, he became the renewer of Nominalism, which is the specifically rationalistic as opposed to the religious mode of metaphysic; and his anti-clerical bias was such that he had to fly from France to Bavaria for protection from the priesthood. To the same refuge fled Marsiglio of Padua, author (with John of Jandun) of the *Defensor Pacis* (1324), "the greatest and most original political treatise of the Middle Ages,"¹ in which it is taught that, though monarchy may be expedient, the sovereignty of the State rests with the people, and the hereditary principle is flatly rejected; while it is insisted that the Church properly consists of all Christians, and that the clergy's authority is restricted to spiritual affairs and moral suasion.² Of all medieval writers on politics before Machiavelli he is the most modern. Only less original is Occam, who at Paris came much under Marsiglio's influence. His philosophic doctrines apparently derive from PIERRE AUREOL (Petrus Aureolus, d. 1321), who with remarkable clearness and emphasis rejected both Realism and the doctrine that what the mind perceives are not realities, but *formæ speculares*. Pierre it was who first enounced the Law of Parsimony in philosophy

¹ Poole, *Illustrations*, p. 265. Cp. Villari, *Life and Times of Machiavelli*, ii, 64–67; Tullo Massarani, *Studii di politica e di storia*, 2a ed. 1899, pp. 112–113; Neander, *Ch. Hist.*, Eng. trans. 1855, ix, 33.

² *Id.* pp. 266–276. Cp. Hardwick, *Church History, Middle Age*, 1853, pp. 346–7.

and science—that causes are not to be multiplied beyond mental necessity—which is specially associated with the name of Occam.¹ Both anticipated modern criticism² alike of the Platonic and the Aristotelian philosophy; and Occam in particular drew so decided a line between the province of reason and that of faith that there can be little doubt on which side his allegiance lay.³ His dialectic is for its time as remarkable as is that of Hume, four centuries later. The most eminent orthodox thinker of the preceding century had been the Franciscan John Duns Scotus (1265 or 1274–1308), who, after teaching great crowds of students at Oxford, was transferred in 1304 to Paris, and in 1308 to Cologne, where he died. A Realist in his philosophy, Duns Scotus opposed the Aristotelian scholasticism, and in particular criticised Thomas Aquinas as having unduly subordinated faith and practice to speculation and theory. The number of matters of faith which Thomas had held to be demonstrable by reason, accordingly, was by Duns Scotus much reduced; and, applying his anti-rationalism to current belief, he fought zealously for the dogma that Mary, like Jesus, was immaculately conceived.⁴ But Occam, turning his predecessor's tactic to a contrary purpose, denied that any matter of faith was demonstrable by reason at all. He granted that on rational grounds the existence of a God was probable, but denied that it was strictly demonstrable, and rejected the ontological argument of Anselm. As to matters of faith, he significantly observed that the will to believe the indemonstrable is meritorious.⁵

Contemporary with Occam was Durand de St. Pourçain, who became a bishop (d. 1332), and, after ranking as of the school of Thomas Aquinas, rejected

¹ Ueberweg, i, 461–2.

² "His (Occam's) philosophy is that of centuries later." (Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 148. Cp. pp. 150–1.)

³ Cp. Hardwick, p. 377, and Rettberg, as there cited.

⁴ Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix. 75–76; Mosheim, 14 c. Pt. ii, ch. iii, § 5. As to his religious bigotry, see Milman, p. 142, notes.

⁵ Ueberweg, i, 460–4; cp. Poole, *Illustrations*, pp. 275–281.

and opposed its doctrine. With all this heresy in the air, the principle of "double truth," originally put in currency by Averroism, came to be held in France as in Italy, in a sense which implied the consciousness that theological truth is not truth at all.¹ Occam's pupil, Buridan, rector of the University of Paris (fl. 1340), substantially avoided theology, and dealt with moral and intellectual problems on their own merits.² It is recorded by Albert of Saxony, who studied at Paris in the first half of the century, that one of his teachers held by the theory of the motion of the earth.³ Even a defender of Church doctrines, Pierre d'Ailly, accepted Occam's view of Theism,⁴ and it appears to be broadly true that Occam had at Paris an unbroken line of successors down to the Reformation.⁵ In a world in which the doctrine of a two-fold truth provided a safety-valve for heresy, such a philosophical doctrine as his could not greatly affect lay thought; but at Paris university in the year 1376 there was a startling display of freethinking by the philosophical students, not a little suggestive of a parody of the Averroist propositions denounced by the Bishop of Paris exactly a century before. Under cover of the doctrine of two-fold truth they propounded a list of 219 theses, in which they (1) denied the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, the resurrection, and the immortality of the soul; (2) affirmed the eternity of matter and the uselessness of prayer, but also posited the principles of astrology; (3) argued that the higher powers of the soul are incapable of sin, and that voluntary sexual intercourse between the unmarried is not sinful; and (4) suggested that there are fables and falsehoods in the gospels as in other books.⁶ The

¹ Cp. Ueberweg, p. 464. Mr. Poole's judgment (p. 280) that Occam "starts from the point of view of a theologian" hardly does justice to his attitude towards theology. Occam had indeed to profess acceptance of theology; but he could not well have made less account of its claims.

² Ueberweg, pp. 465-6.

³ *Id.* p. 466.

⁴ *Id.* *ib.*

⁵ Poole, p. 281.

⁶ Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, Eng. trans. i, 37, citing John of Goch, *De libertate Christiana*, lib. i, cc. 17, 18. Compare the Averroist propositions of 1277, given above, p. 338.

element of youthful gasconnade in the performance is obvious, and the Archbishop sharply scolded the students ; but there must have been much free discussion before such a manifesto could have been produced. Nevertheless, untoward political conditions prevented any dissemination of the freethinking spirit in France ; and not for some two centuries was there such another growth of it. The remarkable case of Nicolaus of Autricuria, who in 1348 was forced to recant his teaching of the atomistic doctrine,¹ illustrates at once the persistence of the spirit of reason in times of darkness, and the impossibility of its triumphing in the wrong conditions.

§ 6. *Thought in the Teutonic Countries.*

The life of the rest of Europe in the early Renaissance period has little special significance in the history of freethought. France and Italy, by German admission, were the lands of the medieval *Aufklärung*.² The poetry of the German Minnesingers, a growth from that of the Troubadours, presented the same anti-clerical features ;³ and the story of *Reynard the Fox* was turned to anti-ecclesiastical purpose in Germany as in France. The relative freethinking set up by the crusaders' contact with the Saracens seems to be the source of doubt of the Minnesinger Freidank concerning the doom of hell-fire on heretics and heathens ; the opinion of WALTER DER VOGELWEIDE that Christians, Jews, and Moslems all serve the same God,⁴ and still more mordant heresy. But such bold freethinking did not spread. Material

¹ Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 187-8 (Eng. trans. i, 225-6).

² Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, i, 164.

³ Gervinus, *Gesch. der deutschen Dichtung*, 5te Ausg. i, 489-499. Even in the period before the Minnesingers the clerical poetry had its anti-clerical side. *Id.* p. 194. Towards the end of the 12th century Nigellus Wireker satirised the monks in his *Brunellus, seu speculum stultorum*. Menzel, *Gesch. der Deutschen*, cap. 252. See Menzel's note, before cited, for a remarkable outbreak of anti-clerical if not anti-Christian satire, in the form of sculpture in an ancient carving in the Strasburg Cathedral.

⁴ Reuter, *Gesch. der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter*, ii, 62-63 ; Gervinus, i, 523 ; ii, 69 ; Kurtz, *Gesch. der deutschen Litteratur*, 1853, i, 428, col. 2.

prosperity rather than culture was the main feature of German progress in the Middle Ages; architecture being the only art greatly developed. Heresy of the anti-ecclesiastical order indeed abounded, and was duly persecuted; but the higher freethinking developments were in the theosophic rather than the rationalistic direction. Albert the Great (fl. 1260), "the universal Doctor," the chief German teacher of the Middle Ages, was of unimpeached orthodoxy.¹

The principal German figure of the period is Master Eckhart (d. 1329), who, finding religious beliefs excluded from the sphere of reason by the freer philosophy of his day, undertook to show that they were all matters of reason. He was, in fact, a mystically reasoning preacher, and he taught in the interests of popular religion. Naturally, as he philosophised on old bases, he did not really subject his beliefs to any sceptical scrutiny, but took them for granted and proceeded speculatively upon them. This sufficed to bring him before the Inquisition at Cologne, where he recanted conditionally on an appeal to the Pope. Dying soon after, he escaped the Papal bull condemning twenty-eight of his doctrines. His school later divided into a heretical and a Church party, of which the former, called the "false free spirits," seems to have either joined or resembled the antinomian Brethren of the Free Spirit, then numerous in Germany. The other section became known as the "Friends of God," a species of mystics who were "faithful to the whole medieval imaginative creed, Transubstantiation, worship of the Virgin and Saints, Purgatory."² Through Tauler and others, Eckhart's pietistic doctrine gave a lead to later Protestant evangelicalism; but the system as a whole can never have been held by any popular body.³

¹ Milman, *Latin Christianity*, 4th ed. ix, 125. Albert was an Aristotelian—a circumstance which makes sad havoc of Menzel's proposition (*Geschichte*, cap. 251) that the "German spirit" did not take naturally to Aristotle. Menzel puts the fact and the theory on opposite pages.

² Milman, *Latin Christianity*, ix, 258. Cp. p. 261.

³ For a very full account of Eckhart's teaching see Dr. A. Lasson's

Dr. Lasson pronounces (Ueberweg, i, 483) that the type of Eckhart's character and teaching "was derived from the innermost essence of the German national character." At the same time he admits that all the offshoots of the school departed more or less widely from Eckhart's type—that is, from the innermost essence of their own national character. It would be as plausible to say that the later mysticism of Fénelon derived from the innermost essence of the French character. The *Imitatio Christi* has been similarly described as expressing the German character, on the assumption that it was written by Thomas à Kempis. Many have held that the author was the Frenchman Gerson (Hallam, *Introd. to Lit. of Europe*, ed. 1872, i, 139–140). It was in all probability, as was held by Suarez, the work of several hands, one a monk of the twelfth century, another a monk of the thirteenth, and the third a theologian of the fifteenth; neither Gerson nor Thomas à Kempis being concerned (Le Clerc, *Hist. Litt. du XIVe Siècle*, 2e édit. pp. 384–5).

Another and a deeper current of thought is seen in the remarkable philosophic work of Bishop Nicolaus of Kues or Cusa (1401–1464), who, professedly by an independent movement of reflection, but really as a result of study of Greek philosophy, reached a larger pantheism than had been formulated by any churchman since the time of John the Scot.¹ There is little or no trace, however, of any influence attained by his teaching, which indeed could appeal only to a very few minds of that day. Less remarkable than the metaphysic of Nicolaus, though also noteworthy in its way, is his *Dialogue* "On Peace, or Concordance of Faith," in which, somewhat in the spirit of Boccaccio's tale of the Three Rings, he aims at a reconciliation of all religions, albeit by way of proving the Christian creed to be the true one.

In the Netherlands and other parts of western Europe,

monograph (§ 106) in Ueberweg's *Hist. of Philos.* i, 467–484; also Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, Eng. trans. ii, 23–31. Cp. Lea, *Hist. of the Inquisition*, ii, 354–9, 362–9, as to the sects. As to Tauler, see Milman, ix, 255–6. He opposed the more advanced pantheism of the Beghards. *Id.* p. 262.

¹ See a good synopsis in Pünjer's *History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. trans. pp. 68–89; and another in Moritz Carrière's *Die philosophische Weltanschauung der Reformationszeit*, 1847, pp. 16–25, which, however, is open to Pünjer's criticism that it is coloured by modern Hegelianism.

the popular anti-ecclesiastical heresy of the thirteenth century spread in various degrees ; but there is only exceptional trace of literate or properly rationalistic free-thinking. Among the most notable developments was the movement in Holland early in the fourteenth century, which compares closely with that of the higher Paulicians and mystics of the two previous centuries, its chief traits being a general pantheism, a denial of the efficacy of the sacrament of the altar, an insistence that all men are sons of God, and a general declaration for "natural light."¹ But this did not progressively develop. Lack of leisured culture in the Low Countries, and the terrorism of the Inquisition, would sufficiently account for the absence of avowed unbelief, though everywhere, probably, some was set up by the contact of travellers with the culture of Italy. It is fairly to be inferred that in a number of cases the murderous crusade against witchcraft which was carried on in the fifteenth century served as a means of suppressing heresy, rationalistic or other. At Arras, for instance, in 1460, the execution of a number of leading citizens on a charge of sorcery seems to have been a blow at free discussion in the "chambers of rhetoric."² And that rationalism, despite such frightful catastrophes, obscurely persisted, is to be gathered from the long vogue of the work of the Spanish physician Raymund of Sebonde,³ who, having taught philosophy at Toulouse, undertook (about 1435) to establish Christianity on a rational foundation⁴ in his *Theologia Naturalis*, made famous later by Montaigne.

To what length the suppressed rationalism of the age could on occasion go is dramatically revealed in the case of HERMANN VAN RYSWYCK, a Dutch priest, burned for heresy at the Hague in 1512. He was not

¹ Dr. Paul Frédéricq, *Geschiedenis der Inquisitie in de Nederlanden, 1025-1520*, Gent, 1892-97, ii, 4-9.

² Michelet, *Hist. de France*, vii—éd. 1857, pp. 125, 172.

³ This name has many forms ; and it is contended that Sabieude is the correct one. See Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics*, 1881, ii, 423.

⁴ Cp. Hallam, *Introd. to Lit. of Europe*, ed. 1872, i, 142-4, and the analysis in Prof. Dowden's *Montaigne*, 1905, p. 127 sq.

only a priest in holy orders, but one of the order of Inquisitors; and he put forth the most impassioned denial and defiance of the Christian creed of which there is any record down to modern times. Tried before the inquisitors in 1502, he declared "with his own mouth and with sane mind" that the world is eternal, and was not created as was alleged by "the fool Moses"; that there is no hell, and no future life; that Christ, whose whole career was flatly contrary to human welfare and reason, was not the son of Omnipotent God, but a fool, a dreamer, and a seducer of ignorant men, of whom untold numbers had been slain on account of him and his absurd evangel; that Moses had not physically received the law from God; and that the Christian faith was shown to be fabulous by a fatuous Scripture, a fictitious Bible, and a crazy Gospel. And to this exasperated testimony he added: "I was born a Christian, but am no longer one: they are fools." Sentenced in 1502 to perpetual imprisonment, he was again brought forward ten years later, and, being found unbroken by that long durance, was as an unrepentant heretic sentenced to be burned on December 14th, 1512, the doom being carried out on the same day. The source of his conviction can be gathered from his declaration that "the most learned Aristotle and his commentator Averroës were nearest the truth"; but his wild sincerity and unyielding courage were all his own. "*Nimis infelix quidam*" is the estimate of an inquisitor of that day.¹ Not so, unless they are most unhappy who die in battle, fighting for the truth they prize. But it has always been the Christian way to condemn all save Christian martyrs.

There is a tolerably full account of Ryswyck's case in a nearly contemporary document, which evidently copies the official record. Ryswyck is described as "*sacrę theologię professorem ordinis predicatorum et inquisitorum*"; and his declaration runs: "*Quod mundum fuit ab eterna et non incipit per creationem fabricatum a stulto Mose, ut dicit Biblia indistincta.Nec est infernus, ut nostri estimant. Item post hanc*

¹ Van Hoogstraten, in Frédéricq, as cited below.

vitam nulla erit vita particularis.....Item doctissimus Aristoteles et ejus commentator Auerrois fuerunt veritati propinquisimi. Item Christum fuit stultus et simplex fantasticus et seductor simplicium hominum.....Quot enim homines interfecti sunt propter ipsum et suum Euangelium fatuum! Item quod omnia que Christus gessit, humano generi et rationi recte sunt contraria. Item Christum filium Dei omnipotentem aperte nego. Et Mosen legem a Deo visibiliter et facialiter suscepisse recuso. Item fides nostra fabulosa est, ut probat nostra fatua Scriptura et ficta Biblia et Euangelium delirum.....Omnes istos articulos et consimilos confessus est proprio ore et sana mente coram inquisitore et notario et testibus, addens: Ego Christianus natus, sed iam non sum Christianus, quoniam illi stultissimi sunt." Paul Frédéricq, *Corpus documentorum Inquisitionis haereticae pravitatis Neerlandicae*, Gent, 1889, i, 494, 501-2.

Thus the Renaissance passed on to the age of the Reformation the seeds of a rationalism which struck far deeper than the doctrine of Luther, but at the same time left a social soil in which such seeds could ill grow. Its own defeat, social and intellectual, may be best realised in terms of its failure to reach either political or physical science. Lack of the former meant political retrogression and bondage; and lack of the latter a renewed dominion of superstition and Bibliolatry—two sets of conditions of which each facilitated the other.

Nothing is more significant of the intellectual climate of the Renaissance than the persistence at all its stages of the belief in astrology, of which we find some dregs even in Bacon. That pseudo-science indeed stands, after all, for the spirit of science, and is not to be diagnosed as mere superstition; being really an *à priori* fallacy fallen into in the deliberate search for some principle of coördination in human affairs. Though adhered to by many prominent Catholics, including Charles V, and by many Protestants, including Melanchthon, it is logically anti-religious, inasmuch as it presupposes in the moral world a reign of natural law, independent of the will or caprice of any personal power. Herein it differs deeply from magic; though in the Renaissance the return to the lore of antiquity often involved an

indiscriminate acceptance and blending of both sorts of occult pagan lore.¹ Magic subordinates Nature to Will : astrology, as apart from angelology, subordinates Will to Cosmic Law. For many perplexed and thoughtful men, accordingly, it was a substitute, more or less satisfying, for the theory, grown to them untenable, of a moral government of the universe. It was in fact a primary form of sociology proper, as it had been the primary form of astronomy ; to which latter science, even in the Renaissance, it was still for many the introduction.

It flourished, above all things, on the insecurity inseparable from the turbulent Italian life of the Renaissance, even as it had flourished on the appalling vicissitude of the drama of imperial Rome ; and it is conceivable that the inclination to true science which is seen in such men as Galileo, after the period of Italian independence, was nourished by the greater stability attained for a time under absolutist rule. And though Protestantism, on the other hand, adhered in the main unreasoningly to the theory of a moral control, that dogma at least served to countervail the dominion of astrology, which was only a dogmatism with a difference, and as such inevitably hindered true science.² On the whole, Protestantism tended to make more effectual that veto on pagan occultism which had been ineffectually passed from time to time by the Catholic Church ; albeit the motive was stress of Christian superstition, and the veto was aimed almost as readily at inductive and true science as at the deductive and false. We shall find the craze of witchcraft, in turn, dominating Protestant countries at a time when freethinkers and liberal Catholics elsewhere were setting it at naught.

Thus the new order contained certain elements of

¹ Maury, *La Magie et l'Astrologie*, 4e éd. pp. 214-216.

² "Judicial astrology.....which supplanted and degraded the art of medicine" (Professor T. Clifford Allbutt, *Harveian Oration on Science and Medieval Thought*, 1901, App. p. 113). There is even a startling survival of it in the physiology of Harvey. *Id.* p. 45.

help for a new life, as against its own inclement principles of authority and dogma ; and the political heterogeneity of Europe, seconded by economic pressures and by new geographic discovery, sufficed further to prevent any far-reaching organisation of tyranny. Under these conditions, new knowledge could incubate new criticism. But it would be an error-breeding oversight to forget that in the many-coloured world before the Reformation there was not only a certain artistic and imaginative sunlight which the Reformation long darkened, but even, athwart the mortal rigours of papal rule, a certain fitful play of intellectual insight to which the peoples of the Reformation became for a time estranged.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REFORMATION, POLITICALLY CONSIDERED

§ 1. *The German Conditions.*

IN a vague and general sense, the ecclesiastical revolution known as the Reformation was a phenomenon of freethought. It was, however, much more akin to a revolt against a hereditary king than to the process of self-examination and logical scrutiny by which men pass from belief to disbelief in a theory of things, a dogma, or a document. The beginning of such a process had indeed taken place in Germany before Luther, in so far as the New Learning represented by such humanists as Erasmus, such scholars as Reuchlin,¹ and such satirists as Ulrich von Hutten, set up a current of educated hostility to the ignorance and the grosser superstitions of the churchmen. For Germany, as for England, this movement was a contagion from the new scholarship and Platonism of Italy;² and the better minds in the four universities founded in the pre-Lutheran generation (Tübingen, 1477; Mayence, 1482; Frankfort-on-the-Oder, 1506; Wittemberg, 1502) necessarily owed much to Italian impulses, which they carried on, though the universities as a whole were bitterly hostile to the new

¹ Who, however, was no rationalist, but an orientalising mystic. Cp. Carriere, *Die philos. Weltanschauung der Reformationszeit*, 1846, pp. 36-38.

² Cp. Ranke, *Hist. of the Ref. in Germany*, B. ii, ch. 1 (Eng. trans. Routledge's 1-vol. ed. 1905, p. 129). The point is fairly put by Audin in the introduction to his *Histoire de Luther*. Compare J. R. Green: "The awakening of a rational Christianity, whether in England or in the Teutonic world at large, begins with the Florentine studies of Sir John Colet" (*Short History of the English People*, ch. vi, § iv, ed. 1881, p. 298). Colet, however, was strictly orthodox. Ulrich von Hutten spent five of the formative years of his life in Italy.

learning.¹ The Dutch freethinker Ryswyck, as we saw, was fundamentally an Averroïst; and Italy was the stronghold of Averroïsm, of which the monistic bias probably fostered the Unitarianism of the sixteenth century. But it was not this literary and scholarly movement that effected the Reformation so-called, which was rather an economic than a mental revolution.

The persistence of Protestant writers in discussing the early history of the Reformation without a glance at the economic causation is one of the great hindrances to historic science. From such popular works as those of D'Aubigné and Häusser it is practically impossible to learn what socially took place in Germany, and the general Protestant reader can learn it only—and imperfectly—from the works on the Catholic side, as Audin's *Histoire de la vie de Luther* (Eng. trans. 1853) and Döllinger's *Die Reformation*, and the more scientific Protestant studies, such as those of Ranke and Bezold (even there not at any great length), to neither of which classes of history will he resort.

Bezold admits that "with perfect justice have recent historians commented on the former underrating of an economic force which certainly played its part in the spread and establishment of the Reformation" (*Gesch. der deutschen Reformation*, 1890, p. 563). The broad fact is that in not a single country could the Reformation have been accomplished without enlisting the powerful classes or corporations, or alternatively the *de facto* governments, by proffering the plunder of the church. Only in a few Swiss cantons, and in Holland, does the confiscation seem to have been made to the common good (cp. the present writer's *Introduction to English Politics*, 1900, pp. 310, 316). But even in Holland needy nobles had finally turned Protestant in the hope of getting church lands. (See Motley, *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, ed. 1863, p. 131.) Elsewhere appropriation of church lands by princes and nobles was the general rule.

Even as to Germany, it is impossible to accept Michelet's indulgent statement that most of the confiscated church property "returned to its true destination, to the schools, the hospitals, the communes; to its true proprietors, the aged, the child, the toiling family" (*Hist. de France*, x, 333; see the same assertion in Henderson, *A Short History of Germany*, 1902, i, 344). Plans to that effect were drawn up; but, as the princes

¹ Hamilton, *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature*, 1852, p. 205.

were left to carry out the arrangement, they took the lion's share. Ranke (*Hist. of the Ref.* B. iv, ch. 5; Eng. trans. 1-vol. ed. 1905, pp. 466-7) admits much grabbing of church lands as early as 1526; merely contending, with Luther, that papist nobles had begun the spoliation. (Cp. Bezold, pp. 564-5; Menzel, *Gesch. der Deutschen*, cap. 393.) In Saxony, when monks broke away from their monasteries, the nobles at once appropriated the lands and buildings (Ranke, p. 467). Luther made a warm appeal to the Elector against the nobles in general (Ranke, p. 467; Luther's letter, Nov. 22nd, 1526, in *Werke*, ed. De Wette, iii, 137; letter to Spalatin, Jan. 1st, 1527, *id.* p. 147; also p. 153). See too his indignant protests against the rapine of the princes and nobles and the starvation of the ministers in the *Table Talk*, cc. 22, 60. Even Philip of Hesse did not adhere to his early and disinterested plans of appropriation (Ranke, pp. 468-9, 711-712). All that Ranke can claim is that "some great institutions were really founded" —to wit, two homes for "young ladies of noble birth," four hospitals, and the theological school of Marburg. And this was in the most hopeful region.

There is positive evidence, further, that not only ecclesiastical but purely charitable foundations were plundered by the Protestants (Witzel, cited by Döllinger, *Die Reformation, ihre innere Entwicklung und ihre Wirkungen*, 1846, i, 46, 47, 51. 62); and, as school foundations were confiscated equally with ecclesiastical in England, there is no reason to doubt the statement. Practically the same process took place in Scotland, where the share of church property proposed to be allotted to the Protestant ministers was never given, and their protests were treated with contempt (Burton, *History of Scotland*, iv, 37-41). Knox's comments were similar to Luther's (*Works*, Laing's ed. ii, 310-312).

Dr. Gardiner, a fairly impartial historian, sums up that, after the German settlement of 1552, "The princes claimed the right of continuing to secularise church lands within their territories as inseparable from their general right of providing for the religion of their subjects.....About a hundred monasteries are said to have fallen victims in the Palatinate alone; and an almost equal number, the gleanings of a richer harvest which had been reaped before the Convention of Passau, were taken possession of in Northern Germany" (*The Thirty Years' War*, 8th ed. p. 11).

The credit of bringing the various forces to a head, doubtless, remains with Luther, though ground was further prepared by literary predecessors such as John

of Wesel and John Wessel, Erasmus, Reuchlin, and Ulrich von Hutten. But even the signal courage of Luther could not have availed to fire an effectual train of action unless a certain number of nobles had been ready to support him for economic reasons. Even the shameless sale of indulgences by Tetzel was resented most keenly on the score that it was draining Germany of money;¹ and nothing is more certain than that Luther began his battle not as a heretic but as an orthodox Catholic Reformer, desiring to propitiate and not to defy the Papacy. Economic forces were the determinants. This becomes the more clear when we note that the Reformation was only the culmination or explosion of certain intellectual, social, and political forces seen at work throughout Christendom for centuries before. In point of mere doctrine, the Protestants of the sixteenth century had been preceded and even distanced by heretics of the eleventh, and by teachers of the ninth. The absurdity of relic-worship, the folly of pilgrimages and fastings, the falsehood of the doctrine of transubstantiation, the heresy of prayers to the saints, the unscripturalness of the hierarchy—these and a dozen other points of protest had been raised by Paulicians, by Paterini, by Beghards, by Apostolicals, by Lollards, long before the time of Luther. As regards his nearer predecessors, indeed, this is now a matter of accepted Protestant history.² What is not properly realised is that the conditions which wrought political success where before there had been political failure were special political conditions; and that to these, and not to supposed differences in national character, is due the geographical course of the Reformation.

¹ As to the general resentment of the money drain, cp. Strauss, *Gespräche von Ulrich von Hutten*, 1860, Vorrede, p. xiv, and the dialogues, pp. 159, 363. Cp. Ranke, B. ii, ch. i (Eng. trans. as cited, pp. 123-6).

² See Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, passim. Even the Peasants' Rising was adumbrated in the movement of Hans Böheim of Nikleshausen (fl. 1476), whose doctrine was both democratic and anti-clerical. (Work cited, ii, 380-1; cp. Bezold, *Gesch. der deutschen Reform.*, 1890, ch. vii.)

§ 2. *The Problem in Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands.*

We have seen that the spirit of reform was strong in Italy three hundred years before Luther; that some of the strongest movements within the church were strictly reformatory, and originally disinterested in a high degree. In less religious forms the same spirit abounded throughout the Renaissance; and at the end of the fifteenth century Savonarola was preaching reform religiously enough at Florence. His death, however, was substantially due to the perception that ecclesiastical reform, as conducted by him, was a socio-political process,¹ whence the reformer was a socio-political disturber. Intellectually he was no innovator; on the contrary, he was a hater of literary enlightenment, and he was as ready to burn astrologers as were his enemies to burn him.² His claim, in his *Triumph of the Cross*, to combat unbelievers by means of sheer natural reason, indicates only his inability to realise any rationalist position—a failure to be expected in his age, when rationalism was denied argumentative utterance, and when the problems of Christian evidences were only being broached. The very form of the book is declamatory rather than ratiocinative, and every question raised is begged.³ That he failed in his crusade of church reform, and that Luther succeeded in his, was due to no difference between Italian and German character, but to the vast difference in the political potentialities of the two cases. The fall of public liberty in Florence, which must have been preceded as it was accompanied by a relative decline in popular culture,⁴ and which led to the failure of Savonarola, may be in a sense attributed to

¹ See Guicciardini's analysis of the parties, cited by E. Armstrong in the "Cambridge Modern History," vol. i, *The Renaissance*, p. 170.

² Burckhardt, *Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, Eng. trans. ed. 1892, pp. 476-7.

³ See the sympathetic analysis of the book by Villari, *Life and Times of Savonarola*, Eng. trans. pp. 582-594, where it is much overrated.

⁴ As to the education of the Florentine common people in the fourteenth century cp. Burckhardt, pp. 203-4; Symonds, *Age of the Despots*, p. 202.

Italian character; but that character was itself the product of peculiar social and political conditions, and was not inferior to that of any northern population.¹

The Savonarolan movement had all the main features of the Puritanism of the northern "Reform." Savonarola sent organised bodies of boys, latterly accompanied by bodies of adults, to force their way into private houses and confiscate things thought suitable for the reformatory bonfire. Burckhardt, p. 477; Perrens, *Jérôme Savonarole*, 2e édit. pp. 140-1. The things burned included pictures and busts of inestimable artistic value, and manuscripts of exquisite beauty. Perrens, p. 229. Compare Villari, as cited; George Eliot's *Romola*, B. III, ch. xlix; and Merejkowski's *The Forerunner* (Eng. trans.), bk. vii. Previous reformers had set up "bonfires of false hair and books against the faith" (Armstrong, as cited, p. 167); and Savonarola's bands of urchins were developments from previous organisations, bent chiefly on blackmail. (*Id.*) But he carried the tyranny furthest, and actually proposed to put obstinate gamblers to the torture. Perrens, p. 132.

When, a generation later, the propaganda of the Lutheran movement reached Italy, it was more eagerly welcomed than in any of the Teutonic countries outside of the first Lutheran circle, though a vigilant system was at once set on foot for the destruction of the imported books.² It had made much headway at Milan and Florence in 1525;³ and we have the testimony of Pope Clement VII. himself that before 1530 the Lutheran heresy was widely spread not only among the laity but among priests and friars, both mendicant and non-mendicant, many of whom propagated it by their sermons.⁴ The ruffianism and buffoonery of the German Lutheran soldiers in the army of Charles V at the sack of Rome in 1529 was hardly likely to win adherents to their sect;⁵ the number increased all over Italy. In 1541-5 they were numerous and audacious at

¹ Armstrong, as cited, pp. 150-1.

² McCrie, *Reformation in Italy*, ed. 1856, pp. 28-30, 41.

³ *Id.* pp. 54, 68.

⁴ *Id.* p. 45, citing Raynald's *Annales*, ad. ann. 1530.

⁵ McCrie reasons otherwise, from the fact that the sack of Rome was by many Catholics regarded as a divine judgment on the papacy; but he omits to mention the pestilence which followed and destroyed the bulk of the conquering army (Menzel, *Gesch. der Deutschen*, Cap. 390).

Bologna,¹ where in 1537 a commission of cardinals and prelates, appointed by Pope Paul III, had reported strongly on the need for reformation in the Church. In 1542 they were so strong at Venice as to contemplate holding public assemblies; in the neighbouring towns of Vicentino, Vicenza, and Trevisano they seem to have been still more numerous;² and Cardinal Caraffa reported to the Pope that all Italy was infected with the heresy.³

Now began the check. Among the Protestants themselves there had gone on the inevitable strifes over the questions of the Trinity and the Eucharist; and the more rational views of Zwingli and Servetus were in notable favour;⁴ and the Catholic reaction, fanned by Caraffa, was the more facile. Measures were first taken against heretical priest and monks; Occhino and Peter Martyr had to fly; and many monks in the monastery of the latter were imprisoned. At Rome was founded, in 1543, the Congregation of the Holy Office, a new Inquisition, on the deadly model of that of Spain; and thenceforth the history of Protestantism in Italy is but one of suppression. The hostile force was all-pervading, organised, and usually armed with the whole secular power; and though in Naples the old detestation of the Inquisition broke out anew so strongly that even the Spanish tyranny could not establish it,⁵ the Papacy

¹ McCrie, pp. 59-60.

² *Id.* p. 66.

³ *Id.* pp. 112, 115.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 89, 98, 215. McCrie thinks it useful to suggest (p. 95) that anti-trinitarianism seems to have begun at Siena, "whose inhabitants were proverbial among their countrymen for levity and inconstancy of mind"—citing Dante, *Inferno*, canto xxix, 121-3. Thus does theology illumine sociology. In a note on the same page the historian cites the testimony of Melanchthon (*Epist.* coll. 852, 941) as to the commonness of "Platonic and sceptical theories" among his Italian correspondents in general; and quotes further the words of Calvin, who for once rises above invective to explain as to heresy (*Opera*, viii, 510) that "In Italis, *propter rarum acumen*, magis eminent." The historian omits, further, to trace German Unitarianism to the levity of a particular community in Germany.

⁵ A. von Reumont, *The Carafas of Maddaloni*, Eng. trans. 1854, pp. 33-37; McCrie, p. 122. It was not Protestantism that made the revolt. The contemporary historian Porzios states that the Lutherans were so few that they could easily be counted. Von Reumont, as cited, p. 33. It was not heresy that moved the Neapolitans, but the knowledge that perjurers could be found in Naples to swear to anything, and that the machine would thus be made one of pecuniary extortion.

elsewhere carried its point by explaining how much more lenient was the Italian than the Spanish Inquisition. Such a pressure, kept up by the strongest economic interest in Italy, no movement could resist ; and it would have suppressed the Reformation in any country or any race, as a similar pressure did in Spain.

Professor Gebhart (*Orig. de la Renais. en Italie*, p. 68) writes that "Italy has known no great national heresies : one sees there no uprising of minds which resembles the profound popular movements provoked by Waldo, Wiclif, John Huss, or Luther." The decisive answer to this is soon given by the author himself (p. 74) : "If the Order of Franciscans has had in the peninsula an astonishing popularity ; if it has, so to speak, formed a church within the church, it is that it responded to the profound aspirations of an entire people." (Cp. p. 77.) Yet again, after telling how the Franciscan heresy of the *Eternal Gospel* so long prevailed, M. Gebhart speaks (p. 78) of the Italians as a people whom "formal heresy has never seduced." These inconsistencies derive from the old fallacy of attributing the course of the Reformation to national character. (See it discussed in the present writer's *Introduction to English Politics*, 1900, pp. 227, 306-8, 311-12, 356-7.) Burckhardt, while recognising—as against the theory of "something lacking in the Italian mind"—that the Italian movements of church reformation "failed to achieve success only because circumstances were against them," goes on to object that the course of "mighty events like the Reformation.....eludes the deductions of the philosophers," and falls back on "mystery." (*Renaissance in Italy*, Eng. trans. p. 457.) There is really much less "mystery" about such movements than about small ones ; and the causes of the Reformation are in large part obvious and simple. Baur, even in the act of claiming special credit for the personality of Luther as the great factor in the Reformation, admits that only in the peculiar political conditions in which he found himself could he have succeeded. (*Kirchengeschichte der neueren Zeit*, 1863, p. 23.)

The broad explanation of the Italian failure is that in Italy reform could not for a moment be dreamt of save as *within* the church, where there was no economic leverage such as effected the Reformation from the outside elsewhere. It was a relatively easy matter in Germany and England to renounce the Pope's control and make the churches national or autonomous. To attempt that in Italy would have meant creating a state of universal and insoluble strife. (Cp. Symonds, *Renaissance in*

Italy, vol i, ed. 1897, p. 369. Mr. Symonds, however, omits to note the *financial* dependence of Italian society on the papal system; and his verdict that *Luther and the nations of the north* saw clearly "what the Italians could not see" is simply the racial fallacy over again.)

Apart from that, the Italians, as we have seen, were as much bent on reformation as any other people in mass; and the earlier Franciscan movement was obviously more disinterested than either the later German or the English, in both of which plunder was the inducement to the leading adherents, as it was also in Switzerland. There the wholesale bestowal of church livings on Italians was the strongest motive to ecclesiastical revolution; and in Zürich, the first canton which adopted the Reformation, the process was made easy by the State guaranteeing posts and pensions for life to the whole twenty-four canons of the chapter. (Vieusseux, *History of Switzerland*, 1840, pp. 120, 128; cp. Zschokke, *Schweizerland's Geschichte*, 9te Ausg. ch. 32, and Jackson, *Huldreich Zwingli*, 1901, pp. 222-5, 295-6.) The Protestants had further the support of the unbelieving soldiery, made anti-religious in the Italian wars, who rejoiced in the process of priest-baiting and plunder (Vieusseux, p. 130).

The process of suppression in Italy was prolonged through sixty years. In 1543 numbers of Protestants began to fly; hundreds more were cast into prison; and, save in a few places, public profession of the heresy was suppressed. In 1546 the papacy persuaded the Venetian senate to put down the Protestant communities in their dominions, and in 1548 there began in Venice a persecution in which many were sent to the galleys. To reach secret Protestantism, the papacy dispersed spies throughout Italy, Ferrara being particularly attended to, as a known hotbed.¹ After the death of the comparatively merciful Paul III (1550), Julius III authorised new severities. A Ferrarese preacher was put to death; and the duchess Renée, the daughter of Louis XII, who had notoriously favoured the heretics, was made virtually a prisoner in her own palace, secluded from her children. At Faenza, a nobleman died under torture at the hands of the inquisitors, and a mob in turn killed some of

¹ *Id.* p. 131.

but the main process went on throughout the country. An old Waldensian community in Calabria having reverted to its former opinions under the new stimulus, it was warred upon by the inquisitors, who employed for the purpose outlaws; and multitudes of victims, including sixty women, were put to the torture.² At Montalto, in 1560, another Waldensian community were taken captive; eighty-eight men were slaughtered, their throats being cut one by one; many more were tortured; the majority of the men were sent to the Spanish galleys; and the women and children were sold into slavery.³ In Venice many were put to death by drowning.⁴

Of individual executions there were many. In a documented list of seventy-eight persons burned alive or hanged and burned at Rome from 1553 to 1600,⁵ only a minority are known to have been Lutherans, the official records being kept on such varying principles that it is impossible to tell how many of the victims were Catholic criminals;⁶ while some heretics are represented—it would seem falsely—as having died in the communion of the church. But probably more than half were Lutherans or Calvinists. The first in the list (1553) are Giovanni Mollio,⁷ a Minorite friar of Montalcino, who had been a professor at Brescia and Bologna, and Giovanni Teodori⁸ of Perugia; and the former is stated in the official record to have recommended his soul to

¹ *Id.* pp. 143-4.

² *Id.* pp. 158-161.

³ *Id.* pp. 161-3. This seems to have been one of the latest instances of enslavement in Italy. As to the selling of many Capuan women in Rome after the capture of Capua in 1501, see Burckhardt, p. 279, *note*.

⁴ McCrie, pp. 140-143.

⁵ Domenico Orano, *Liberi Pensatori bruciati in Roma dal XVI al XVIII Secolo*, Roma, 1904. Giordano Bruno is 77th in the list; and there are only eight more. The 85th case was in 1642; and the last—the burning of a dead body—in 1761.

⁶ Orano, p. 13.

⁷ McCrie gives this name as Tisserano.

⁸ Signor Orano gives the name as Buzio, citing the 1835 Italian translation of McCrie, and pronouncing Cantù (ii, 338) wrong in making it Mollio. But in the 1856 ed. of McCrie's work the name is given (pp. 57-58, 168-9) as John Mollio. Cantù then appears to have been right; but the date he gives, 1533, seems to be a blunder.

God, the Virgin Mary, St. Francis, and St. Anthony of Padua, though he had been condemned as an obstinate Lutheran. The next victims (1556) are the Milanese friar Ambrogio de Cavoli, who dies "firm in his false opinion," and Pomponio Angerio or Algieri of Nola, a student aged twenty-four, who, "as being obstinate, was burned alive."¹ These were the first victims of Caraffa after his elevation to the papal chair as Paul IV. Under Pius IV three were burned in 1560; under Pius V two in 1566, six in 1567, six in 1568, and so on. Francesco Cellario, an ex-Franciscan friar, living as a refugee and Protestant preacher in the Grisons, was kidnapped, taken to Rome, and burned² (1569). A Neapolitan nobleman, Pompeo de Monti, caught in Rome, was officially declared to have "renounced head by head all the errors he had held," and accordingly was benignantly beheaded.³ Quite a number, including the learned protonotary Carnesecchi (1567), are alleged to have died "in the bosom of the church."⁴ On the other hand, some of the Inquisitors themselves came under the charge of heresy, two cardinals and a bishop being actually prosecuted⁵—whether for Lutheranism or for other forms of private judgment does not appear.

Simple Lutheranism, however, seems to have been the usual limit of heresy among those burned. Aonio Paleario (originally Antonio della Paglia or de' Pagliaricci) of Veroli⁶—poet and professor of rhetoric at Milan, hanged in 1570 (in his seventieth year) either for denouncing the Inquisition or for Lutheranism—was an extreme heretic from the Catholic point of view. His *Actio in Romanos Pontificos et eorum assecclas* is still

¹ Orano, p. 6; McCrie, pp. 169-170.

² McCrie, p. 212; Orano, p. 33.

³ Orano, pp. 15-16. McCrie, p. 165, says he was strangled; but the official record is "fu mozza la testa."

⁴ Orano, p. 22. As to Carnesecchi's career, see McCrie, pp. 173-9; and Babington's ed. of Paleario, 1855, Introd. pp. lxx-lxvi.

⁵ McCrie, p. 164.

⁶ As to whom see McCrie, *Reformation in Italy*, ed. 1856, pp. 81-84, 179-182.

denounced by the church.¹ If, however, he was the author of the *Trattato utilissimo del beneficio di Giesu Crocifisso verso I Christiani*, he was simply an evangelical of the school of Luther, exalting faith and making light of works; and its "remedies against the temptation of doubt" deal solely with theological difficulties, not with critical unbelief.² This treatise, immensely popular in the sixteenth century, was so zealously destroyed by the church that when Ranke wrote no copy was known to exist.³ The *Trattato* was placed on the first papal *Index Expurgatorius* in 1549; and the nearly complete extinction of the book is an important illustration of the church's faculty of suppressing literature.

The *Index*, anticipated by Charles V in the Netherlands several years earlier, was established especially to resist the Reformation; and its third class contained a prohibition of all anonymous books published since 1519. The destruction of books in Italy in the first twenty years of the work of the Congregation of the Index was enormous, nearly every library being decimated, and many annihilated. All editions of the classics, and even of the Fathers, annotated by Protestants, or by Erasmus, were destroyed; the library of the Medicean College at Florence, despite the appeals of Duke Cosmo, was denuded of many works of past generations, now pronounced heretical; and many dead writers who had passed for good Catholics were put on the *Index*. Booksellers, plundered of their stocks, were fain to seek another calling; and printers, seeing that any one of them who printed a condemned work had every book printed by him put on the *Index*, were driven to refuse all save works officially accredited. It was considered a merciful relaxation of the procedure when, after the death of Paul IV (1555), certain books,

¹ Marini, *Galileo e l'Inquisizione*, Roma, 1850, p. 37, note.

² Babington's ed. p. 46 sq.

³ It was afterwards unearthed, however; and Babington's ed. (1855) is an almost facsimile reprint, with old French and English versions.

such as Erasmus's editions of the Fathers, were allowed to be merely mutilated.¹ The effect of the whole machinery in making Italy in the seventeenth century relatively unlearned and illiterate cannot easily be overstated.

In fine, the Reformation failed in Italy because of the economic and political conditions, as it failed in Spain ; as it failed in a large part of Germany ; as it would have failed in Holland had Philip II made his capital there (in which case Spain might very well have become Protestant) ; and as it would have failed in England had Elizabeth been a Catholic, like her sister. During the sixty years from 1520 to 1580, thousands of Italian Protestants left Italy, as thousands of Spanish Protestants fled from Spain, and thousands of English Protestants from England in the reign of Mary.² To make the outcome in Italy and Spain a basis for a theory of racial tendency in religion, or racial defect of "public spirit," is to explain history in a fashion which, in physical science, has long been discredited as an argument in a circle.

McCrie, at the old standpoint, says of the Inquisition that "this iniquitous and bloody tribunal could never obtain a footing either in France or in Germany"; that "the attempt to introduce it in the Netherlands was resisted by the adherents of the old as well as the disciples of the new religion ; and it kindled a civil war which.....issued in establishing civil and religious liberty"; and that "the ease with which it was introduced into Italy showed that, whatever illumination there was among the Italians.....they were destitute of that public spirit and energy of principle which were requisite to shake off the degrading yoke by which they were oppressed." The ethical attitude of the Christian historian is noteworthy ; but we are here concerned with his historiography. A little reflection will make it clear that the non-establishment of the Inquisition in France and Germany was due precisely to the fact that the Papacy was not *in* these countries as it was in Italy, and that the native Governments resented external influence.

¹ Cp. McCrie, pp. 114-7.

² Cp. McCrie, *Reformation in Italy*, ch. v ; *Reformation in Spain*, ch. viii ; Green, *Short History of the English People*, pp. 358, 362.

As to the Netherlands, the statement is misleading in the extreme. The Inquisition set up by Charles V was long and fully established in the Low Countries ; and Motley recognises that it was there more severe even than in Spain. It was Charles V who, in 1546, gave orders for the establishment of the Inquisition in Naples, when the people so effectually resisted. The view, finally, that the attempt to suppress heresy caused the Dutch revolt is merely part of the mythology of the Reformation. Charles V, at the outset of his reign, stood to Spain in the relation of a foreign king who, with his Flemish courtiers, exploited Spanish revenues. Only by making Madrid his capital and turning semi-Spanish did he at all reverse that relation between the two parts of his dominions. So late as 1550 he set up an exceptionally merciless form of the Inquisition in the Low Countries, and this without losing any of the loyalty of the middle and upper classes, Protestantism having made its converts only among the poor. In 1546, too, he had set up an *Index Expurgatorius* with the assistance of the theological faculty at Louvain ; and there was actually a Flemish *Index* in print before the papal one (McCrie, *Ref. in Italy*, p. 184 ; Ticknor, *Hist. of Spanish Lit.*, 6th ed. i, 493).

What set up the breach between the Netherlands and Spain was the failure of Philip II to adjust himself to Dutch interests as his father had adjusted himself to Spanish. The sunderance was on lines of economic interest and racial jealousy ; and Dutch Protestantism was not the cause, but the effect. In the war, indeed, multitudes of Dutch Catholics held persistently with their Protestant fellow-countrymen against Spain, as many English Catholics fought against the Armada. As late as 1600 the majority of the people of Groningen were still Catholics, as the great majority are now in North Brabant and Limburg ; and in 1900 the Catholics in the Netherlands were nearly a third of the whole. From first to last, too, the Dutch Protestant creed and polity were those set up by Calvin, a Frenchman.

For further details and references as to the political evolution, see the present writer's *Introduction to English Politics*, 1900, pp. 304-313.

To those accustomed to the conventional view, the case may become clearer on a survey of the course of anti-papalism in other countries than those mentioned. The political determination of the process in the sixteenth century, indeed, cannot be properly realised save in the light of kindred movements of earlier date, when the

“Teutonic conscience” made, not for reform, but for fixation.

§ 3. *The Hussite Failure in Bohemia.*

That the causal forces in the Reformation were neither racial religious bias nor special gift on the part of any religious teachers is made tolerably clear by the pre-Lutheran episode of the Hussites in Bohemia a century before the German movement. In Bohemia as elsewhere clerical avarice, worldliness, and misconduct had long kept up anti-clerical feeling; and the adoption of Wiclif's teaching by Huss¹ at the end of the fourteenth century was the result, and not the cause, of Bohemian anti-papalism.² The Waldensians, whose doctrines were closely akin to those of Huss, were represented in Bohemia as early as the twelfth century; and so late as 1330 their community was a teaching centre, able to send money help to the Waldensians of Italy. So apparent was the heredity that Æneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius II, maintained that the Hussites were a branch of the Waldenses.³

Before Huss, too, a whole series of native reformers, beginning with the Moravian Miltz, Archdeacon of Prague, had set up a partly anti-clerical propaganda. Miltz, who gave up his emoluments (1363) to become a wandering preacher, actually wrote a *Libellus de Anti-christo*, affirming that the church was already in Anti-christ's power, or nearly so.⁴ It was written while he was imprisoned by the Inquisition at Rome at the instance of the mendicant orders, whom he censured. As, however, the later hostility he incurred, up to his death, was on the score of his influence with the people,

¹ Huss, in his youth, at first turned from Wiclif's writings with horror. Bonnechose, *The Reformers before the Reformation*, Eng. trans. 1844, i, 72.

² Cp. Krasinski, *Histor. Sketch of the Reformation in Poland*, 1838, i, 58.

³ Krasinski, *Sketch of the Religious History of the Slavonic Nations*, 2nd ed. 1851, pp. 26-27.

⁴ Neander, ix, 242 sq.; Hardwick, pp. 426-7. Miltz effected a remarkable reformation of life in Prague. Neander, p. 241.

the treatise cannot well have been current in his lifetime. A contemporary, Conrad of Waldhausen, holding similar views, joined Miltitz in opposing the mendicant friars as Wiclif was doing at the same period ; and the King of Bohemia (the emperor Charles IV) gave zealous countenance to both. A follower of Miltitz, Matthias of Janow, a prebendary of Prague, holding the same views as to Antichrist, wrote a book on *The Abomination of Desolation of Priests and Monks*, and yet another to similar effect.

There was thus a considerable movement in the direction of church reform before either Huss or Wiclif was heard in Bohemia ; and a Bohemian king had shown a reforming zeal, apparently not on financial motives, before any other European potentate. And whereas racial jealousy of the dominant Italians was a main factor in the movement of Luther, the much more strongly motivated jealousy of the Czechs against the Germans who exploited Bohemia was a main element in the salient movement of the Hussites.¹ Called in to work the silver mines, and led further by the increasing field for commerce and industry,² the more civilised Germans secured control of the Czech church and monasteries, appropriating most of the best livings. As they greatly predominated also at the university of Prague, Huss, whose inspiration was largely racial patriotism, wrought with his colleague Jerome to have the university made strictly national.³ When, accordingly, the German heads of the university still (1403 and 1408) condemned the doctrines of Wiclif as preached by Huss, the motives of the censors were as much racial and economic as theological ; that is to say, the "Teutonic

¹ See the very intelligent survey of the situation in Kautsky's *Communism in Central Europe in the Time of the Reformation*, Eng. trans. 1897, p. 35 sq.

² Kautsky, p. 42.

³ K. Raumer, *Contrib. to the Hist. of the German Universities*, New York, 1859, p. 19 ; Dr. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. ii, Pt. i, 223-6 ; Bonnechese, i, 78 ; Mosheim, 15 Cent. Pt. ii, ch. ii, § 6 ; Gieseler, Per. iii, Div. v, § 150 ; Krasinski, as cited, pp. 31-33.

conscience" operated in its own interest to the exaltation of papal rule against the Czech conscience.

The first crisis in the racial struggle ended in Huss's obtaining a royal decree (1409) giving three votes in university affairs (wherein, according to medieval custom, the voting was by nations) to the Bohemians, and only one to the Germans, though the latter were the majority. Thereupon a multitude of the German students, marched back to Germany, where there was founded for them the university of Leipzig;¹ and the racial quarrel was more envenomed than ever.

At the same time the ecclesiastical authorities, closely allied with the German interest, took up the cause of the church against heresy; tradesmen, suffering through the withdrawal of the Germans, backed them; and Archbishop Sbinko of Prague, having procured a papal bull, caused a number of Wiclifian and other manuscripts to be burned² (1410), soon after excommunicating Huss. The now nationalist university protested, and the king sequestrated the estates of the bishop on his refusal to indemnify the owners of the manuscripts. In 1411, further, Huss denounced the proposed papal crusade against Naples, and in 1412 the sale of indulgences by permission of Pope John XXIII, exactly as Luther denounced those of Leo X a century later, calling the Pope Antichrist in the Lutheran manner, while his partisans burned the papal bulls.³ For the rest, he preached against image-worship, auricular confession, ceremonialism, and clerical endowments.⁴ At the Council of Constance (1415), accordingly, there was arrayed against him a solid mass of German churchmen,

¹ Krasinski, *Sketch*, p. 33; Kautsky, p. 43; Maclaine's note to Mosheim, as cited; Rashdall, pp. 225-6, 254. The exodus has been much exaggerated. Only 602 were enrolled at Leipzig.

² Many of these were of great beauty and value, and must have been owned by rich men. Krasinski, *Sketch*, p. 34.

³ Hardwick, p. 433. Jerome caused the bull to be "fastened to an immodest woman," and so paraded through the town before being burnt. Gieseler, iv, 114, note 15.

⁴ Bonnechese, ii, 122; Gieseler, as cited.

including the ex-rector of Prague university, now bishop of Misnia. Further, the Germans were scholastically, as a rule, Nominalists, and Huss a Realist; and as Gerson, the most powerful of the French prelates, was zealous for the former school, he threw his influence on the German side,¹ as did the Bishop of London on the part of England.² The forty-five Wiclifian heresies, therefore, were re-condemned; Huss was sentenced to imprisonment, though he had gone to the Council under a letter of safe-conduct from the emperor;³ and on his refusal to retract he was burned alive (July 6th, 1415). Jerome, taking flight, was caught, and, being imprisoned, recanted; but later revoked the recantation and was burned likewise (May 30th, 1416).

The subsequent fortunes of the Hussite party were determined as usual by the political and economic forces. The king of Bohemia had joyfully accepted Huss's doctrine that the tithes were not the property of the churchmen; and had locally protected him as his "fowl with the golden eggs," proceeding to plunder the church as did the German princes in the next age.⁴ When, later, the revolutionary Hussites began plundering churches and monasteries, the Bohemian nobles in their turn profited,⁵ and became good Hussites accordingly; while yet another aristocracy was formed in Prague by the citizens who managed the confiscations there.⁶ As happened earlier in Hungary and later in Germany, again, there followed a revolt of the peasants against their extortionate masters;⁷ and there resulted a period of ferocious civil war and exacerbated fanaticism. Ziska, the Hussite leader, had been a strong anti-German;⁸ and when the emperor entered into the

¹ See Mosheim's very interesting note; and Gieseler, iv, 104-5.

² Krasinski, p. 51.

³ For an account of the devices of Catholic historians to explain away the Council's treachery, see Bonnechose, note E. to vol. i, p. 270. The Council itself simply declared that faith was not to be kept with a heretic. *Id.* p. 271; Gieseler, p. 121.

⁴ Bonnechose, ii, 118-120. Cp. Krasinski, p. 37.

⁵ Kautsky, pp. 48-49.

⁶ *Id.* p. 51.

⁷ *Id.* p. 52.

⁸ Krasinski, p. 65.

struggle the racial hatred grew more intense than ever. On the Hussite side the claim for "the cup" (that is, the administration of the eucharist with wine as well as bread, in the original manner, departed from by the Church in the eleventh century) indicated the nature of the religious feeling involved. More memorable was the communistic zeal of the advanced section of the Taborites (so called from the town of Tabor, their headquarters), who anticipated the German movement of the Anabaptists,¹ a small minority seeking to set up community of women. For the rest, all the other main features of later Protestantism came up at the same time—the zealous establishment of schools for the young;² the insistence on the Bible as the sole standard of knowledge and practice; inflexible courage in warfare and good military organisation, with determined denial of sacerdotal claims.³

The ideal collapsed as similar ideals did before and afterwards. First the main body of the Hussites, led by Ziska, though at war with the Catholics in general and the Germans in particular, warred murderously also on the extremer communists, called the Adamites, and destroyed them (1421). Then, as the country became more and more exhausted by the civil war, the common people gradually fell away from the Taborites, who were the prime fanatics of the period. The zeal of the communist section, too, itself fell away; and at length, in 1434, the Taborites, betrayed by one of their generals, were defeated with great slaughter by the nobles in the battle of Lipan. Meanwhile, the upper aristocracy had reaped the economic fruits of the revolution at the expense of townsmen, small proprietors, and peasants;⁴ and, just as the lot of the German peasants in Luther's day was worse after their vain revolt than before, so the

¹ See their principles stated in Kautsky, p. 59.

² Aeneas Sylvius, who detested the Taborites, declared them to have only one good quality, the love of letters. Letter to Carvajal, cited by Krasinski, p. 93, *note*.

³ Kautsky, pp. 59-67.

⁴ *Id.* p. 76.

Bohemian peasantry at the close of the fifteenth century had sunk back to the condition of serfdom from which they had almost completely emerged at the beginning. It is doubtful, indeed, whether the material lot of the poor was bettered in any degree at any stage of the Protestant revolution, in any country. So little efficacy for social betterment has a movement guided by a light set above reason.

But in Bohemia the reformers in the mass never capitulated, as did those of Germany, to the powers of feudalism and capital. The Hussite movement as a whole was from first to last Bibliolatrous, fanatical, unenlightened save by a few democratic instincts, and it came socially to nothing in consequence ; but it was a single-minded effort on democratic lines, and it did not add to the vice of ferocity that of double-dealing.

That there was in the period some Christian free-thinking of a finer sort than the general Taborite doctrine is proved by the recovery of the unprinted work of the Czech Peter Helchitsky (Chelcicky), *The Act of Faith*, which impeached the current orthodoxy and the ecclesiastico-political system on the lines of the more exalted of the Paulicians and the Lollards, very much to the same effect as the modern gospel of Tolstoy. In the midst of a party of warlike fanatics Helchitsky denounced war as mere wholesale murder, taught the sinfulness of wealth, declaimed against cities as the great corrupters of life, and preached a peaceful and non-resistant anarchism, ignoring the State. But his party in turn developed into that of the Bohemian Brethren, an intensely Puritan sect, opposed to learning, and ashamed of the memory of the communism in which their order began.¹ Of permanent gain to culture there is hardly a trace in the entire evolution.

¹ Kautsky, pp. 78 82. See further the account of Helchitsky's book in Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, ch. i.

§ 4. *Anti-Papalism in Hungary.*

As in Bohemia, so in Hungary, there was a ready popular inclination to religious independence of Rome before the Lutheran period. The limited sway of the Hungarian monarchy left the nobles abnormally powerful, and their normal jealousy of the wealth of the church made them in the thirteenth century favourable to the Waldenses and recalcitrant to the Inquisition.¹ In the period of the Hussite wars a similar protection was long given to the thousands of refugees led by Ziska from Bohemia into Hungary in 1424.² The famous king Matthias Corvinus, who put severe checks on clerical revenue, had as his favourite court poet the anti-papal bishop of Wardein, John, surnamed Panonicus, who openly derided the Papal Jubilee as a financial contrivance.³ Under Matthias' successor, the ill-fated Uladislau II, began a persecution, pushed on by his priest-ruled queen (1440), which drove many Hussites into Wallachia; and at the date of Luther's movement the superior clergy of Hungary were a powerful body of feudal nobles, living mainly as such, wielding secular power, and impoverishing the State.⁴ As the crusade got up by the papacy against the Turks (1514) drew away many serfs, and ended in a peasant war against the nobility, put down with immense slaughter, and followed by oppression both of peasants and small landholders, there was a ready hearing for the Lutheran doctrines in Hungary. Nowhere, probably, did so many join the Reformation movement in so short a time.⁵ As elsewhere, a number of the clergy came forward; and the resistance of the rest was proportionally severe, though Queen Mary, the wife of King Louis II, was pro-Lutheran.⁶ Books were burned by cartloads; and the diet was induced to pass a general

¹ *Hist. of the Prot. Church in Hungary* (anon.), Eng. trans. by Dr. J. Craig, 1854, p. 17.

² *Id.* p. 19.

³ *Id.* pp. 23, 28.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 24, 32, citing the chronicler Thurnschwamm.

⁵ *Id.* pp. 29-31.

⁶ *Id.* p. 34.

decree for the burning of all Lutherans.¹ The great Turkish invasion under Soliman (1526) could not draw the priests from their heresy-hunt; but the subsequent division of sovereignty between John Zapoyla and Ferdinand I, and above all the disdainful tolerance of the Turkish Sultan in the parts under his authority,² permitted of a continuous spread of the anti-papal doctrine. About 1546 four bishops joined the Lutheran side, one getting married; and in Transylvania in particular the whole church property was ere long confiscated to "the State"; so that in 1556, when only two monasteries remained, the Bishop withdrew. Of the tithes, it is said, the Protestant clergy held three-fourths, and retained them till 1848.³ In 1559, according to the same authority, only three families of magnates still adhered to the Pope; the lesser nobility were nearly all Protestant; and the Lutherans among the common people were as thirty to one.⁴

As a matter of course, church property had been confiscated on all hands by the nobles, Ferdinand having been unable to hinder them. Soon after the battle of Mohács (1526) the nobles in diet decided not to fill up the places of deceased prelates, but to make over the emoluments of the bishoprics to "such men as deserved well of their country." Within a short time seven great territories were so accorded to as many magnates and generals, "nearly all of whom separated from the Church of Rome, and became steady supporters of the Reformation."⁵ The Hungarian "Reformation" was thus remarkably complete.

Its subsequent decadence is one of the proofs that, even as the Reformation movement had succeeded by secular force, so it was only to be maintained on the same footing by excluding Catholic propaganda. In Hungary, as elsewhere, strife speedily arose among Reformers on the two issues on which reason could play within the limits of Scripturalism—the doctrine of

¹ *Hist. of the Prot. Church in Hungary*, p. 37.

³ *Id.* pp. 69-70.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 45, 73.

² *Id.* p. 58.

⁵ *Id.* p. 45.

the eucharist and the divinity of Jesus. On the former question the majority took the semi-rationalist view of Zwingli, making the eucharist a simple commemoration; and a strong minority in Transylvania became Socinian. The Italian Unitarian Giorgio Biandrata (or Blandrata¹), driven to Poland from Switzerland for his anti-trinitarianism, and called from Poland to be the physician of the Prince of Transylvania, organised a ten days' debate between Trinitarians and Unitarians at Weissenberg in 1568; and at the close the latter obtained from the nobles present all the privileges enjoyed by the Lutherans, even securing control of the cathedral and schools of Clausenburg.² It is remarkable that this, the most advanced movement of Protestantism, has practically held its ground in Transylvania to the present day.³

The advance, however, meant desperate schism, and disaster to the main Protestant cause. The professors of Wittemberg appealed to the orthodox authorities to suppress the heresy, with no better result than a public repudiation of the doctrine of the Trinity at the Synod of Wardein,⁴ and an organisation of the Unitarian churches. In due course these in turn divided. In 1578 Biandrata's colleague, Ferencz Davides, contended for a cessation of prayers to Christ, whereupon Biandrata invited Fausto Sozzini from Basel to confute him; and the confutation finally took the shape of condemning Davides in 1579 to perpetual imprisonment, in which he passed the rest of his life.⁵ Between the Helvetic and Augsburg confessionalsists, meanwhile, the strife was equally bitter; and it needed only free scope for the new organisation of the Jesuits to secure the reconquest of the greater part of Hungary for the Catholic Church.

¹ Called Blandvater in the History above cited, which is copied in this error by Hardwick.

² Schlegel's note to Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 708.

³ Cp. Mosheim, last cit.

⁴ *Hist. of the Prot. Church in Hungary*, p. 86.

⁵ Schlegel, as cited. Biandrata later gave up his Unitarianism, turning simple Protestant. He was murdered by his nephew in 1591.

The course of events had shown that the Protestant principle of private judgment led those who would loyally act on it further and further from the historic faith ; and there was no such general spirit of free-thought in existence as could support such an advance. In contrast with the ever-dividing and mutually anathematising parties of the dissenters, the ostensible solidity of the Catholic Church had an attraction which obscured all former perception of her corruptions ; and the fixity of her dogma reassured those who recoiled in horror from Zwinglianism and Socinianism, as the adherents of these systems recoiled in turn from that of Davides. Only the absolute suppression of the Jesuits, as in Elizabethan England, could have saved the situation ; and the political circumstances which had facilitated the spread of Protestantism were equally favourable to the advent of the reaction. As the Huguenot nobles in France gradually withdrew from their sect in the seventeenth century, so the Protestant nobles in Hungary began to withdraw from theirs towards the end of the sixteenth. What the Jesuits could not achieve by propaganda was compassed by imperial dragonnades ; and in 1601 only a few Protestant congregations remained in all Styria and Carinthia.¹ Admittedly, however, the Jesuits wrought much by sheer polemic, the pungent writings of their Cardinal Pazmány having the effect of converting a number of nobles,² while the Protestants, instead of answering the most effective of Pazmány's attacks, *The Guide to Truth*, spent their energies in fighting each other.³

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there ensued enough of persecution by the Catholic rulers to have roused a new growth of Protestantism, if that could longer avail ; but the balance of forces remained broadly unchanged. Orthodox Protestantism and orthodox Unitarianism, having no new principle of

¹ *History* cited, p. 109. As to the persecutions see pp. 108-115.

² *Id.* pp. 128-9, 132.

³ *Id.* p. 134.

criticism as against those turned upon themselves by the Jesuits, and no new means of obtaining an economic leverage, have made latterly no headway against Catholicism, which is to-day professed by more than half the people of Hungary, while among the remainder the Greek Catholics and Greek Orientals respectively outnumber the Helvetic and Lutheran Churches. The future is to some more searching principle of thought.

§ 5. *Protestantism in Poland.*

The chief triumph of the Jesuit reaction was won in Poland; and there, perhaps, is to be found the best illustration of the failure of mere Protestantism, on the one hand, to develop a self-maintaining intellectual principle, and the worse failure, on the other hand, of an organised and unresisted Catholicism to secure either political or intellectual vitality.

Opposition to the Papacy on nationalist as well as on general grounds is nearly as well marked in Polish history as in Bohemian, from the pagan period onwards, the first Christian priesthood being chiefly foreign,¹ while, as in Bohemia, the people clung to vernacular worship. In 1078 we find King Boleslav the Dauntless (otherwise the Cruel) executing the Bishop of Cracow, taxing the lands of the church, and vetoing the bestowal of posts on foreigners.² He in turn was driven into exile by a combination of clergy and nobles. A century later a Polish diet vetoes the confiscation of the property of deceased bishops by the sovereign princes of the various provinces; and a generation later still the veto is seen to be disregarded.³ In the middle of the thirteenth century there are further violent quarrels between dukes and clergy over tithes, the former successfully ordering and the latter vainly resisting a money commutation; till in 1279 Duke Boleslav of Cracow

¹ Krasinski, *Hist. of the Reformation in Poland*, 1838, i, 29-30.

² *Id.* pp. 30-34.

³ *Id.* p. 38.

is induced to grant the bishops almost unlimited immunities and powers.¹ Under Casimir the Great (1333-1370) further strifes occur on similar grounds between the equestrian order and the clergy, the king sometimes supporting the latter against the former, as in the freeing of serfs, and sometimes enforcing taxation of church lands with violence.² In the next reign the immunities granted by Boleslav in 1279 are cancelled by the equestrian order, acting in concert. And while these strifes had all been on economic grounds, we meet in 1341 with a heretical movement, set up by John Pirnensis, who denounced the Pope as Antichrist in the fashion of the Bohemian reformers of the next generation. The people of Breslau seem to have gone over bodily to the heresy; and when the Inquisition of Cracow attempted forcible repression the Chief Inquisitor was murdered in a riot.³

It was thus natural that in the fourteenth century the Hussite movement should spread greatly in Poland, and the papacy be defied in matters of nomination by the king.⁴ The Poles had long frequented the university of Prague; and Huss's colleague Jerome was called in to organise the university of Cracow in 1413. Against the Hussite doctrines the Catholic clergy had to resort largely to written polemic,⁵ their power being small; though the king confirmed their synodical decree making heresy high treason. In 1450 Poland obtained its law of Habeas Corpus,⁶ over two centuries before England; and under that safeguard numbers of the nobility declared themselves Hussites. In 1435 some of the chief of these formed a confederation against church and crown; and in 1439 they proclaimed an abolition of tithes, and demanded, on the lines of the earlier English Lollards, that the enormous estates of the clergy should be appropriated to public purposes. In the diet of 1459, again, a learned noble, John Ostrorog, who had studied at Padua, delivered an address, afterwards expanded

¹ *Hist. of the Reformation in Poland*, i, 40-42.

² *Id.* p. 45.

³ *Id.* pp. 55-6.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 47-50.

⁵ *Id.* pp. 65-6.

⁶ *Id.* p. 67.

into a Latin book, denouncing the revenue exactions of the papacy, and proposing to confiscate the annates, or first fruits of ecclesiastical offices so exacted; proceeding further to bring against the Polish clergy in general all the usual charges of simony, avarice, and fraud, and indicting the mendicant orders as having demoralised the common people.¹

The Poles having no such nationalist motive in their Hussitism as had the Bohemians, who were fighting German domination, there took place in Poland no such convulsions as followed the Bohemian movement; but, when the Lutheran impulse came in the next century, the German element which had been added to Poland by the incorporation of the order and territory of the Teutonic knights in 1466, made an easy way for the German heresy. In Dantzic, the Lutheran inhabitants in 1524 took the churches from the Catholics, and, terrorising the town council, shut up and secularised the monasteries and convents.² In 1526, with due bloodshed, the king effected a counter-revolution in the Catholic interest; but still the heresy spread, the law of Habeas Corpus thwarting all clerical attempts at persecution, and the king being at heart something of an indifferentist in religion.³ In the province of Great Poland was formed (1530-40) a Lutheran church, protected by a powerful family; and in Cracow a group of scholars formed a non-sectarian organisation to evangelise the country. Among them, about 1546, occurred the first expression of Polish Unitarianism, the innovator being Pastoris, a Belgian priest.⁴

On lines of simple Protestantism the movement was rapid, many aristocrats and clergy declaring for it;⁵ and in the Diets of 1550 and 1552 was shown an increasingly strong anti-Catholic feeling, which the church was virtually powerless to punish. In 1549 a

¹ *Hist. of the Reformation in Poland*, i, 91-98.

² *Id.* pp. 111-116.

³ *Id.* p. 134.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 139, 345, following Wengierski.

⁵ *Id.* pp. 143, 344, note.

parish priest publicly married a wife, and the bishop of Cracow abandoned the attempt to displace him. The next bishop, Zebrzydowski, a favourite pupil of Erasmus, was said by a Socinian writer of the period to have openly expressed disbelief in immortality and other dogmas;¹ but when in 1552 a noble refused to pay tithes, he ecclesiastically condemned him to death, and declared his property confiscated. The sentence, however, could not be put in force; and when the other heads of the church, seeing their revenues menaced and their clergy in large part tending to heresy,² attempted a general and severe prosecution of backsliding priests, the resistance of the magistracy brought the effort to nothing.³ The Diet of 1552 practically abrogated the ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and despite much intrigue the economic interest of the landowners continued to maintain the Protestant movement, which was rapidly organised on German and Swiss models. It was by the play of its own elements of strife that its ascendancy was undermined.

On the one hand, an influential cleric, Orzechowski, who had married and turned Protestant, reconciled himself to Rome on the death of his wife, having already begun a fierce polemic against the Unitarian tendencies appearing on the Protestant side in the teaching of the Italian Stancari (1550); on the other hand, those tendencies gained head till they ruptured the party, of which the Trinitarian majority further quarrelled violently among themselves till, as in Hungary, many were driven back to the arms of Catholicism. In a Synod held in 1556, one Peter Goniondzki⁴ (Gonesius)—who as a Catholic had violently opposed Stancari in 1550, but in the interim had studied in Switzerland and turned Protestant—took up a more anti-Trinitarian position than Stancari's, affirming three Gods, of whom the Son and the Spirit were subordinate

¹ *Hist. of the Reformation in Poland*, i, 163.

² *Id.* p. 173, note.

³ *Id.* pp. 176-7.

⁴ *I.e.*, Peter of Goniond, a small town in Podlachia.

to the Father. A few years later he declared against infant baptism—here giving forth opinions he had met with in Moravia; and he rapidly drew to him a considerable following alike of ministers and of wealthy laymen.¹

It was thus not the primary influence of Lelio Sozzini, who had visited Poland in 1551 and did not return till 1558, that set up the remarkable growth of Unitarianism in that country. It would seem rather that in the country of Copernicus the relative weakness of the church had admitted of a more common approach to freedom of thought than was seen elsewhere;² and the impunity of the new movements brought many heterodox fugitives (as it did Jews) from other lands. One of the newcomers, the learned Italian, George Biandrata, whose Unitarianism had been cautiously veiled, was made one of the superintendents of the "Helvetic" Church of Little Poland, and aimed at avoidance of dogmatic strifes; but after his withdrawal to Transylvania Gregorius Pauli, a minister of Cracow, of Italian descent, went further than Gonesius had done, and declared Jesus to be a mere man.³ After various attempts at suppression and compromise by the orthodox majority, a group of Unitarian ministers and nobles formally renounced the doctrine of the Trinity at the Conference of Petrikov in 1562; and, on a formal condemnation being passed by an orthodox majority at Cracow in 1563, there was formed a Unitarian Church, with forty-two subscribing ministers, Zwinglian as to the eucharist, and opposed to infant baptism.⁴ Ethically, its doctrine was humane and pacificatory, its members being forbidden to go to law or to take oaths; and for a time the community made great progress, the national Diet being, by one account, "filled with Arians" for a time.⁵

¹ Krasinski, i, 346-8; Mosheim, 16 Cent. sect. III, Pt. ii, ch. iv, § 7; and Schlegel's and Reid's notes.

² Cp. Mosheim, chapter last cited, § 15 sq.

³ Krasinski, i, 357.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 357-360.

⁵ *Id.* p. 363.

Meantime the Calvinist, Zwinglian, and Lutheran Protestant Churches quarrelled as fiercely in Poland as elsewhere, every compromise breaking down, till the abundant relapses of nobles and common people to Catholicism began to rebuild the power of the old church, which found in "the Great Cardinal," Hosius, a statesman and controversialist unequalled on the Protestant side. Backed by the Jesuits, he gained by every Protestant dispute, the Jesuit order building itself up with its usual skill. And the course of politics told conclusively in the same direction. King Stephen Battory favoured the Jesuits; and King Sigismund III, who had been educated as a Catholic by his mother, systematically gave effect to his personal leanings by the use of his peculiar feudal powers. Under the ancient constitution the king had the bestowal of a number of life-tenures of great estates, called *starosties*; and the granting of these Sigismund made conditional on the acceptance of Catholicism.¹ Thus the Protestantism of the nobles, which had been in large part originally determined by economic interests, was dissolved by a reversal of the same force, very much in the fashion in which it was disintegrated in France by the policy of Richelieu at the same period. At the close of Sigismund's reign Protestantism was definitively broken up; and the Jesuit ascendancy permitted even of frequent persecutions of heresy. From these Unitarians could not escape; and at length, in 1658, they were expelled from the country, now completely subject to Jesuitism. In the country in which Protestantism and Unitarianism in turn had spread most rapidly under favouring political and social conditions, the rise of contrary conditions had most rapidly and decisively overthrown them.

§ 6. *The Struggle in France.*

The political and economic conditioning of the

¹ Krasinski, *Hist. of the Ref. in Poland*, ii, 93-94; *Sketch of the Rel. Hist. of the Slav. Nations*, p. 188.

Reformation may perhaps best be understood, finally, by following the fortunes of Protestantism in France. When Luther began his schism, France might reasonably have been held a much more likely field for its extension than England. While King Henry was still to earn from the papacy the title of "Defender of the Faith" as against Luther, King Francis had exacted from the Pope (1516) a Concordat by which the appointment of all abbots and bishops in France was vested in the crown, the papacy receiving only the annates, or first year's revenue. For centuries, too, the French throne and the papacy had been chronically at strife; for seventy years a French pope, subservient to the king, had sat at Avignon; and before the Concordat the "Pragmatic Sanction," first enacted in 1268 by the devout St. Louis, had since the reign of Charles VII, who reinforced it (1438), kept the Gallican Church on a semi-independent footing towards Rome. By the account of the chancellor Du Prat in 1517, the "Pragmatic," then superseded by the Concordat, had isolated France among the Catholic peoples, causing her to be regarded as inclined to heresy.¹ In 1512 the Council of Pisa, convoked by Louis XII, had denounced Pope Julius II as a dangerous schismatic, and he had retaliated by placing France under interdict. In the previous year the French king had given his protection to a famous farce by Pierre Gringoire, in which, on Shrove Tuesday, the Pope was openly ridiculed.² Nowhere, in short, was the papacy as such less respected.

The whole strife, however, between the French kings and the Popes had been for revenue, not on any question of doctrine. In the three years (1461-64) during which Louis XI had for his own purposes suspended the Pragmatic Sanction, it was found that

¹ Cited by Lutteroth, *La Réformation en France pendant sa première période*, 1859, p. 2.

² A. A. Tilley, in Vol. II of the "Cambridge Modern History"—*The Reformation*, ch. ix. p. 281.

2,500,000 crowns had gone from France to Rome for "expetatives" and "dispensations," besides 340,000 crowns for bulls for archbishoprics, bishoprics, abbeys, priories, and deaneries.¹ This drain was naturally resisted by church and crown alike. Louis XI restored the Pragmatic Sanction. Louis XII re-enacted it in 1499 with new severity; and the effect of the Concordat of Francis I was merely to win over the Pope by dividing between the king and him the power of plunder by the sale of ecclesiastical offices.² It was accordingly much resented by the Parlement, the University, the clergy, and the people of Paris; but the king overbore all opposition. Though, therefore, he had at times some disposition to make a "reform" on the Lutheran lines, he had no such motive thereto as had the kings and nobles of the other northern countries; and he had further no such personal motive as had Henry VIII of England. Under the existing arrangement he was as well provided for as might be, since "the patronage of some six hundred bishoprics and abbeys furnished him with a convenient and inexpensive method of providing for his diplomatic service, and of rewarding literary merit."³ The troubles in Germany, besides, were a warning against letting loose a movement of popular fanaticism.⁴

When, therefore, Protestantism and Lutheranism begun to show head in France, they had no friends at once powerful and zealous. Before Luther, in 1512, Jacques Lefèvre of Étaples laid down in the commentary on his Latin translation of the Pauline Epistles the Lutheran doctrine of grace, and in effect denied the received doctrine of transubstantiation.⁵ In 1520 his former pupil, Guillaume Briçonnet, Bishop of Meaux, invited him and some younger reformers, among them Guillaume Farel, to join him in teaching in his diocese;

¹ Professor H. M. Baird, *Hist. of the Rise of the Huguenots*, 1880, i, 33.

² *Id.* i, 35.

³ Tilley, as cited, p. 281.

⁴ Lutteroth, pp. 14-16.

⁵ Tilley, p. 282. The translation was notable as a revision of the Vulgate version, which was printed side by side with it.

and in 1523 appeared Lefèvre's translation of and commentary on the Gospels, which effectually began the Protestant movement in France.¹

Persecution soon began. The king's adoring sister, Margaret, Duchess of Alençon (afterwards Queen of Navarre), was the friend of Briçonnet, but was powerless to help at home even her own intimates.² At first the king and his mother encouraged the movement at Meaux while sending out a dozen preachers through France to combat the Lutheran teaching;³ but in 1524, setting out on his Italian campaign, the king saw fit to conciliate his clergy, and his clerical chancellor Du Prat began measures of repression, the queen-mother assenting, and Briçonnet's own brother assisting. Already, in 1521, the Sorbonne had condemned Luther's writings, and the Parlement of Paris had ordered the surrender of all copies. In 1523 the works of Louis de Berquin, the anti-clerical friend of Erasmus, were condemned, and himself imprisoned; and Briçonnet consented to issue synodal decrees against Luther's books and against certain Lutheran doctrines preached in his own diocese. Only by the king's intervention was Berquin at this time released.

The first man slain was Jean Chastellain, a shoemaker of Tournay, burned at Vic in Lorraine on January 12th, 1525. The next was a wool-carder of Meaux,⁴ who was first whipped and branded for a fanatical outrage, then burned to death, with slow tortures, for a further outrage against an image of the Virgin at Metz (July, 1525). Later, an ecclesiastic of the Meaux group, Jacques Banvan of Picardy, was prosecuted at Paris for anti-Lutheran heresy, and publicly recanted; but repented, retracted his abjuration, and was burned on the Place de Grève, in August, 1526; a nameless "hermit of Livry" suffering the same death

¹ Lutteroth, pp. 3-4; Baird, i, 79.

² Michelet, *Hist. de France*, tom. x, *La Réforme*, ch. viii.

³ Lutteroth, p. 9.

⁴ Michelet, éd. 1884, x, 308; Baird, i, 89, *note*.

about the same time beside the cathedral of Notre Dame.¹ Meantime Lefèvre had taken refuge in Strasbourg, and, despite a letter of veto from the king, now in captivity at Madrid, his works were condemned by the Sorbonne. When released, the king not only recalled him but made him tutor to his children. Ecclesiastical pressures, however, forced him finally to take refuge under the Queen of Navarre at Nérac, in Gascony, where he mourned his avoidance of martyrdom.²

So determined had been the persecution that in 1526 Berquin was a second time imprisoned, and with difficulty saved from death by the written command of the captive king, sent on his sister's appeal.³ And when the released king, to secure the deliverance of his hostage sons, felt bound to conciliate the Pope, and to secure funds had to conciliate the clergy, Marguerite, compelled to marry the king of Navarre, could do nothing more for Protestantism,⁴ being herself openly and furiously denounced by the Catholic clergy.⁵ Bought by a clerical subsidy, the king, on the occasion of a new outrage on a statue of the Virgin (1528),⁶ associated himself with the popular indignation; and when the audacious Berquin, despite the dissuasions of Erasmus, resumed his anti-Catholic polemic, and in particular undertook to prove that the chief of the Sorbonne was not a Christian,⁷ he was re-arrested, tried, and condemned to be publicly branded and imprisoned for life. On his announcing an appeal to the absent king, and to the Pope, a fresh sentence, this time of death, was hurriedly passed; and he was strangled and burned (1529) within two hours of the sentence,⁸ to the intense joy of the ecclesiastical multitude.

¹ See Baird, i, 91, *note*, as to the dates, which are usually put a year too early.

² Baird, i, 95-96, and *note*.

³ *Id.* p. 132.

⁴ Michelet, x, 314; Baird, i, 133-7.

⁵ Lutteroth, p. 15; Michelet, x, 337.

⁶ Other such outrages followed, and did much to intensify persecution.

⁷ Erasmus had said that one pamphlet of Bédæ's contained "eighty lies, three hundred calumnies, and forty-seven blasphemies" (Michelet, x, 320).

⁸ Baird, i, 143-144; Michelet, x, 321-6.

After various vacillations, the king in 1534 had the fresh pretext of Protestant outrage—the affixing of an anti-Catholic placard to the door of his own room¹—for permitting a fresh persecution after he had refused the Pope's request that he should join in a general extermination of heresy,² and there began at Paris a series of human sacrifices. In November, 1534, seven men were condemned to be burned alive, one of them for printing Lutheran books. In December, others followed; and in January, 1535, on the occasion of a royal procession "to appease the wrath of God," six Lutherans (by one account, three by another) were burned alive by slow fires, one of the victims being a schoolmistress.³ It was on this occasion that the king, in a public speech, declared: "Were one of my arms infected with this poison, I would cut it off. Were my own children tainted, I should immolate them."⁴

Under such circumstances religious zeal naturally went far. In six months there were passed 102 sentences of death, of which twenty-seven were executed, the majority of the condemned having escaped by flight. Thereafter the individual burnings are past counting. On an old demand of the Sorbonne, the king actually sent to the Parlement an edict abolishing the art of printing;⁵ which he duly recalled when the Parlement declined to register it. But the French Government was now committed to persecution. The Sorbonne's declaration against Luther in 1521 had proclaimed as to the heretics that "their impious and shameless arrogance must be restrained by chains, by censures, nay, by fire and flame, rather than confuted by argument";⁶ and in that spirit the ruling clergy proceeded, the king abetting them. In 1543 he ordained that heresy should be

¹ Michelet, x, 338-9.

² Baird, i, 149.

³ Lutteroth, p. 17; Michelet, x, 340 (giving the text of a contemporary record); Baird, i, 173-8—a very full account.

⁴ See Baird, i, 176, *note*, as to the authenticity of the utterance, which was doubted by Voltaire.

⁵ Michelet, x, 342; Baird, i, 169.

⁶ Cit. by Baird, i, 24, *note*.

punished as sedition;¹ and in 1545, under an Ordinance granted by him in 1540, there were massacred at Merindol and Cabrière in Dauphiné, as incorrigible "Waldenses and Lutherans," eight hundred men, women, and children.² The result of this and further cruelties was simply the wider diffusion of heresy, and a whole era of civil war, devastation, and demoralisation.

Meantime, Calvin had been driven abroad, to found a Protestant polity at Geneva and give a lead to those of England and Scotland. The balance of political forces prevented a Protestant polity in France; but nowhere else in the sixteenth century did Protestantism fight so long and hard a battle. That the Reformation was a product of "Teutonic conscience" is an inveterate fallacy.³ The country in which Protestantism was intellectually most disinterested and morally most active was France. "The main battle of erudition and doctrine against the Catholic Church," justly contends Guizot, "was sustained by the French reformers; it was in France and Holland, and always in French, that most of the philosophic, historical, and polemic works on that side were written; neither Germany nor England, certainly, employed in the cause at that epoch more intelligence and science."⁴ Nor was there in France any such licence on the Protestant side as arose in Germany, though the French Protestants were as violently intolerant as any. Their ultimate decline, after long and desperate wars ending in a political compromise, was due to the play of socio-economic causes under the wise and tolerant administration of Richelieu, who opened the royal services to the Protestant nobles.⁵ The French character had proved as unsubduable in Protestantism as any other; and the generation which in large part gradually reverted to

¹ Baird, i, 221-2.

² Lutteroth, pp. 39-40; Baird, i, 240 sq.

³ It is endorsed by Professor Clifford, *Lectures and Essays*, 2nd ed. p. 335.

⁴ *Hist. de la Civ. en France*, 13e édit. i, 18.

⁵ See the case well made out by Buckle, ch. viii—1-vol. ed. pp. 311-13.

Catholicism did but show that it had learned the lesson of the strifes which had followed on the Reformation—that Protestantism was no solution of either the moral or the intellectual problems of religion and politics.

§ 7. *The Political Process in Britain.*

It was thus by no predilection or faculty of "race" that the Reformation so-called came to be associated historically with the northern or "Teutonic" nations. They simply succeeded in making permanent, by reason of more propitious political circumstances, a species of ecclesiastical revelation in which other races led the way. As Hussitism failed in Bohemia, Lollardism came to nothing in England in the same age, after a period of great vogue and activity.¹ The designs of Parliament on the revenues of the church at the beginning of the fifteenth century² had failed by reason of the alliance knit between church and crown in the times when the latter needed backing; and at the accession of Henry VIII England was more orthodox than any of the other leading States of Northern Europe.³ The personal need of the despotic king for a divorce which the Pope dared not give him was the first adequate lead to the rejection of the Papal authority. On this the plunder of the monasteries followed, as a forced measure of finance,⁴ of precaution against Papal influence, and for the creation of a body of new interests vitally hostile to a Papal restoration. The king and the people were alike Romanists in doctrine; the Protestant nobles who ruled under Edward VI were for the most part mere cynical plunderers, appropriating alike church

¹ See above, p. 390.

² Stubbs, *Const. Hist.* 3rd ed. ii, 469, 471, 510.

³ Cp. Froude, *History of England*, ed. 1872, i, 173; Burnet, *Hist. of the Reformation*, Nares' ed. i, 17-18. Henry, says Burnet, "cherished churchmen more than any king in England had ever done." Compare further Shaftesbury, *Miscellaneous Reflections*, in the *Characteristics*, Misc. iii, ch. i, ed. 1733, vol. iii, p. 151; Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, as cited above, p. 316.

⁴ Cp. Burnet, as cited, pref. p. xl, and p. 3; Heylyn, *Hist. of the Ref.* pref.

goods, lands, and school endowments more shamelessly than even did the potentates of Germany; and on the accession of Queen Mary the nation gladly reverted to Romish usages, though the spoil-holders would not surrender a yard of church lands.¹ Had there been a succession of Catholic sovereigns, Catholicism would certainly have been restored. Protestantism was only slowly built up by the new clerical and heretical propaganda, and by the state of hostility set up between England and the Catholic Powers. It was the episode of the Spanish Armada that, by identifying Catholicism with the cause of the great national enemy, made the people grow definitely anti-Catholic. Even in Shakespeare's dramas the old state of things is seen not yet vitally changed.

In Scotland, though there the priesthood had fewer friends than almost anywhere else, the act of Reformation was mainly one of pure and simple plunder of church property by the needy nobility, in conscious imitation of the policy of Henry VIII, at a time when the throne was vacant; and there too Protestant doctrine was only gradually established by the new race of preachers, trained in the school of Calvin. In Ireland, on the other hand, Protestantism became identified with the cause of the oppressor, just as for England Romanism was the cause of the enemy-in-chief. "Race" and "national character," whatever they may be understood to mean, had nothing whatever to do with the course of events, and doctrinal enlightenment had just as little.² In the words of a distinguished clerical historian: "No truth is more certain than this, that the real motives of religious action do not work on men in masses; and that the enthusiasm which creates Crusaders, Inquisitors, Hussites, Puritans, is not the result of conviction, but

¹ Heylyn, as cited, and i, 123-7, ed. 1849; A. F. Leach, *English Schools at the Reformation*, 1896, pp. 5-6; J. E. G. De Montmorency, *State Intervention in English Education*, 1902, pp. 62-65.

² The subject is treated at some length in *The Dynamics of Religion*, by "M. W. Wiseman" (J. M. R.), 1897, pp. 3-46.

of passion provoked by oppression or resistance, maintained by self-will, or stimulated by the mere desire of victory.”¹ To this it need only be added that the desire of gain is also a factor, and that accordingly the anti-Papal movement succeeded where the balance of political forces could be turned against the clerical interest, and failed where the latter predominated.

¹ Bishop Stubbs, *Const. Hist. of England*, 3d. ed. iii, 638. Cp. Bishop Creighton, *The Age of Elizabeth*, p. 6; Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, i, 366.

CHAPTER XII.

THE REFORMATION AND FREETHOUGHT

§ 1. *Germany and Switzerland.*

IN the circumstances set forth in the last chapter the Reformation could stand for only the minimum of free-thought needed to secure political action. Some decided unbelief there was within its original sphere;¹ the best known instance being the private latitudinarianism of such humanist teachers as Mutianus and Crotus, of the Erfurt University, in the closing years of the fifteenth century. Trained in Italy, Mutianus in his private correspondence avowed the opinion that the religion of Christ was as old as the world, and that all the names of the deities of all faiths stood for but one God and one Goddess²—the latter being presumably, in his opinion, Mother Earth. But such esoteric doctrine can have had no part in the main movement; and though at the same period we see among the common people the satirist Heinrich Bebel, a Swabian peasant's son, jesting for them over the doctrines of trinity in unity, the resurrection, doomsday, and the sacraments,³ it is certain that that influence counted for little in the way of serious thinking. It was only as separate and serious heresies that such doctrines could long propagate themselves; and Luther in his letter to the people of Antwerp⁴ speaks

¹ Ranke, *History of the Popes*, Eng. trans. 1-vol. ed. p. 23; Hardwick, *Church History: Reformation*, ed. 1886, p. 250.

² Bezold, *Gesch. der deutschen Reformation*, 1890, p. 226. Bezold describes Mutianus as "der freigeistige Kanonikus zu Gotha," and points out, concerning his universalism, that "the historic Christ thus slips through his fingers."

³ Bezold, as last cited. "Here is the skepticism, kept in the background by Mutianus and Celtis, popularised in the rudest way."

⁴ *Briefe*, ed. De Wette, iii, 60.

of one sect or group as rejecting baptism, another the eucharist, another the divinity of Jesus, and yet another affirming a middle state between the present life and the day of judgment. One teacher in Antwerp he describes as saying that every man has the Holy Ghost, that being simply reason and understanding, that there is no hell, and that doing as we would be done by is faith ; but this heretic does not seem to have founded a sect. The most extensive wave of really innovating thought was that set up by the social and anti-sacerdotal revolt of the Anabaptists, among whom, too, occurred the first popular avowals of Unitarianism.

In the way of literature, Unitarian doctrine came from John Campanus, of Jülich ; Ludwig Hetzer, a priest of Zürich ; and (in a minor degree) Johann Denk, school-rector in Nüremberg in 1524,¹ and afterwards one of the earlier leaders of the Anabaptist movement. All three were men of academic training ; and Hetzer, who wrote explicitly against the divinity of Christ, had previously made, with the aid of Denk, a German translation, which was used by Luther, of the Hebrew prophets (1527). He was beheaded at Constance in 1529, nominally on the charge of practising free-love.² Campanus, who published a book attacking the doctrine of the Trinity and the teaching of Luther, had to leave Wittemberg in consequence, and finally died after a long imprisonment in Cleve. Denk—an amiable and estimable man³—is said, on very scant grounds, to have recanted before he died.

Not only from such thoroughgoing heresy, but from the whole Anabaptist secession, and no less from the rising of the peasants, the main Lutheran movement kept itself utterly aloof ; and, though the Catholics

¹ Karl Hagen, *Deutschlands lit. u. relig. Verhältnisse im Reformations-seitalter*, ii, 110 ; letter of Capito to Zwingli, *Ep. Zwinglii*, i, 47 ; F. C. Baur, *Kirchengeschichte*, iv, 450 ; Trechsel, *Der proto-Antitrinitarianismus vor Faustus Socinus*, 1839-44, i, 13-16, 33.

² Schlegel's note to Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 689 ; Baur, iv, 450 ; Trechsel, i, 13-16.

³ See a good account of him by Beard, Hibbert Lectures on *The Reformation*, p. 204 sq.

naturally identified the extremer parties with the Reformation, its official or "Centre" polity made little for intellectual or political as distinct from ecclesiastical innovation. Towards the Peasants' Revolt, which at first he favoured, inasmuch as the peasants, whom he had courted, came to him for counsel, Luther's final attitude was so brutal that it has to-day almost no apologist; and in this, as in some of his other evil departures, the "mild" Melanchthon went with him.¹ Their doctrine was the very negation of all democracy, and must be interpreted as an absolute capitulation to the nobles, without whose backing they knew themselves to be ecclesiastically helpless. In the massacres to which Luther gave his eager approval a hundred thousand men were destroyed.² "From this time onwards," pronounces Baur, "Luther ceases to be the representative of the spirit of his time: he represents only one side of it.....Thenceforth his writings have no more the universal bearing they once had, but only a particular.....In the political connection we must date from Luther's attitude to the Peasants' War the Lutheran theory of unconditional obedience. Christianity, as Luther preached it, has given to princes unlimited power of despotism and tyranny; while the poor man who, without right of protest, must submit to everything, will be compensated for his earthly sufferings in heaven."³ Naturally the princes henceforth grew more and more Lutheran.

As naturally the crushed peasantry turned away from the Reformation in despair. Luther had in the first instance approached them, not they him. Before the revolt the reformers had made the peasant a kind of

¹ For an impartial criticism of their language see Henderson's *Short History of Germany*, i, 321-3. Cp. Baur, *Kirchengeschichte*, iv, 73-76; A. F. Pollard in "Cambridge Modern History," ii, 192-5; Beard, Hibbert Lectures on *The Reformation*, 1883, p. 200; and Kautsky, *Communism in Central Europe in the Time of the Reformation*, Eng. trans. 1897, pp. 117-128.

² Kohlrusch, *Hist. of Germany*, Eng. trans. p. 397.

³ To the same effect Menzel, *Gesch. der Deutschen*, Capp. 391, 492.

hero in their propaganda ;¹ and when in the first and moderate stage of the rising its motives were set forth in sixty-two articles, these were purely agrarian. "There is no trace of a religious element in them, no indication that their authors had ever heard of Luther or of the Gospel."² Then it was that Luther commended them ; and thereafter "a religious element began to obtrude."³ When the overthrow began, doubtless sincerely reproaching the violences of the insurgents, he hounded on the princes in their work of massacre, Melanchthon chiming in. Thereafter, as Melanchthon admitted, the people showed a detestation of the Lutheran clergy ;⁴ and among many there was even developed a kind of "materialistic atheism."⁵

The political outcome, as aforesaid, was a thoroughly undemocratic organisation of Protestantism in Germany ; and, though the ecclesiastical tyranny which resulted from the more democratic system of Calvin was not more favourable to progress or happiness, the final German system of *cujus regio, ejus religio*—every district taking the religion of its ruler—must be summed up as a mere negation of the right of private judgment. Save for the attempt of a Frenchman, François Lambert of Avignon, to organise a self-governing church, German Protestantism showed almost no democratic feeling.⁶ The one poor excuse for Luther was that the peasants had never recognised the need or duty of maintaining their clergy.⁷ And seeing how the wealth of the church went to the nobles and the well-to-do, and how downtrodden were the peasants all along, it would be surprising indeed if they had. They were not the workers of the ecclesiastical Reformation, and it wrought little or nothing for them.

The side on which the whole movement made for new light was its promotion of common schools, which enabled many of the people for the first time to

¹ Pollard, as cited, p. 175.

³ *Id.* pp. 179, 193.

⁶ Ranke, as cited, pp. 459-464.

² *Id.* p. 178.

⁵ *Id.* p. 192.

⁷ *Id.* p. 461.

read.¹ This tendency had been seen among the Waldenses, the Lollards, and the Hussites, and for the same reasons. Such movements depended for their existence on the reading of the sacred books by the people for themselves; and to make readers was their first concern. In this connection, of course, note must be taken of the higher educational revival *before* the Reformation,² without which the ecclesiastical revolution could not have taken place even in Germany. As we saw, a literary expansion preceded the Hussite movement in Bohemia; and the stir of concern for written knowledge, delightedly acclaimed by Ulrich von Hutten, is recognised by all thoughtful historians before the rise of Luther. The ability to read, indeed, must have been fairly general in the middle class in Germany, for it appears that the partisan favour shown everywhere to Luther's writings by the printers and booksellers gave him an immense propagandist advantage over his Catholic opponents, who could secure for their replies only careless or bad workmanship, and were thus made to seem actually illiterate in the eyes of the reading public.³

As regards Switzerland, again, it is the admitted fact that "the educational movement began before the religious revival, and was a cause of the Reformation rather than a result."⁴ So in Holland, the Brethren of the Common Lot (*Fratres Vitæ Communis*), a partially communistic but orthodox order of learned and unlearned laymen which lasted from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, did much for the schooling of the common people, and passed on their impulse to Germany.⁵

¹ Cp. Michelet, *Hist. de France*, x, *La Reforme*, ed. 1882, pp. 104, 332.

² Cp. Burckhard, *De Ulrichi Hutteni Vita Commentarius*, 1717, i, 65. For a general view see Ranke, pp. 126-139.

³ Jakob Marx, *Die Ursachen der schnellen Verbreitung der Reformation, zunächst in Deutschland*, 1847, § 12.

⁴ Professor J. M. Vincent, in Professor S. M. Jackson's *Huldreich Zwingli*, 1901, p. 37.

⁵ Cp. Ullmann, *Reformers before the Reformation*, Eng. trans. 1855, i, 19; ii, *passim*; Mosheim, 15 Cent. Pt. ii, ch. ii, § 22; and Bonet-Maury's thesis, *De Opera Scholastica Fratrum Vitæ Communis*, 1889.

Similarly in Scotland¹ the schools were fairly good even in the later Catholic period. There, and in some other countries, it was the main merit of the Reformation to carry on zealously the work so begun, setting up common schools in every parish. In Lutheran Germany this work was for a long period much more poorly done, as regarded the peasantry. These had been trodden down after their revolt into a state of virtual slavery. "The broad midlands and the entire eastern part of Germany were filled with slaves, who had neither status nor property nor education";² and it was long before any large number of the people were taught to read and write,³ the schooling given at the best being a scanty theological drill.⁴

But indeed for two-thirds of its adherents everywhere the Reformation meant no other reading than that of the Bible and catechisms and theological treatises. Coming as it did within one or two generations of the invention of printing, it stood not for new ideas, but for the spread of old. That invention had for a time positively checked the production of new books, the multiplication of the old having in a measure turned attention to the past;⁵ and the diffusion of the Bible in particular determined the mental attitude of the movement in mass. The thinking of its more disinterested promoters began and ended in Bibliolatry: Luther and Calvin alike did but set up an infallible book and a local tyranny against an infallible Pope and a tyranny centring at Rome. Neither dreamt of toleration; and Calvin, the

¹ Burton, *History of Scotland*, iii, 399-401.

² Menzel, Cap. 492.

³ *Id. ib.* (ed. 1837, p. 762).

⁴ Ranke (p. 466) becomes positively lyrical over the happy lot of the peasant who received Luther's Catechism (1529). "It contains enduring comfort in every affliction, and, under a slight husk, the kernel of truths able to satisfy the wisest of the wise." Such declamation holds the place that ought to have been filled by an account of economic conditions.

⁵ Bishop Stubbs, *Const. Hist. of England*, iii, 627. The bishop, however, holds that in the time of Lollard prosperity the ability to read was widely diffused in England (p. 628); and it seems certain that in the first half of the fifteenth century printing multiplied enormously. Cp. Michelet, *Hist. de France*, x, ed. 1884, p. 103 sq.

more competent mind of the two, did but weld the detached irrationalities of the current theology into a system which crushed reason and stultified the morality in the name of which he ruled Geneva with a rod of iron.¹ It is remarkable that both men reverted to the narrowest orthodoxies of the earlier church, in defiance of whatever spirit of reasonable inquiry had been on the side of their movement. "It is a quality of faith," wrote Luther, "that it wrings the neck of reason and strangles the beast";² and he repeatedly avowed that it was only by submitting his mind absolutely to the Scriptures that he could retain his faith.³ "He despised reason as heartily as any Papal dogmatist could despise it. He hated the very thought of toleration or comprehension."⁴ And when Calvin was combated by the Catholic Pighius on the question of predestination and freewill, his defence was that he followed Christ and the Apostles, while his opponents resorted to human thoughts and reasonings.⁵ On the same principle he dealt with the Copernican theory. After once breaking away from Rome both leaders became typical anti-freethinkers, never even making Savonarola's pretence to resort to rationalist methods, though of course not more anti-rationalist than he. The more reasonable Zwingli, who tried to put an intelligible aspect on one or two of the mysteries of the faith, was scouted by both, as they scouted each other.

It is noteworthy that Zwingli, the most open-minded of the Reformers, owed his relative enlightenment to his general humanist culture,⁶ and in particular to the

¹ Cp. Willis, *Servetus and Calvin*, 1877, B. ii, ch. 1; Audin, *Histoire de Calvin*, éd. abrég. ch. xxiv-xxvii; and essay on "Machiavelli and Calvin" in the present writer's *Essays in Sociology*, 1903, vol. i.

² *Werke*, ed. Walch, viii, 2043 (*On Ep. to Galat.*), cited by Beard.

³ *Id.* viii, 1181 (*On 1 Cor. xv*). Cp. other citations in Beard, Hibbert Lectures on *The Reformation*, 1883, pp. 161-5.

⁴ Green, *Short History*, ch. vi, § v, p. 315.

⁵ Cp. Stähelin, *Johannes Calvin*, 1863, ii, 282-3.

⁶ He was educated at Basel and Berne and at Vienna University, and of all the leading reformers he seems to have had most knowledge of classical literature. Hess, *Life of Zwingli*, Eng. trans. 1812, pp. 2-7, following Myconius and Hottinger.

influence of Pico della Mirandola and of Erasmus. It has even been argued that his whole theological system is derived from Pico ;¹ but it appears to have been from Erasmus that he drew his semi-rationalistic view of the eucharist,² a development of that of Berengar, representing it as a simple commemoration. Such thinking was far from the "spirit of the Reformation"; and Luther, after the Colloquy of Marburg (1529), in which he and Melanchthon debated against Zwingli and Oecolampadius, spoke of those "Sacramentarians" as "not only liars but the very incarnation of lying, deceit, and hypocrisy."³ Zwingli's language is less ferocious; but it is confessed of him that he too practised coercion against minorities in the case alike of the Anabaptists and of the monasteries and nunneries, and even in the establishment of his reformed eucharist.⁴ The expulsion of the nuns of St. Katherinenthal in particular was an act of sheer tyranny; and the outcome of the methods enforced by him at Zürich was the bitter hostility of the five Forest Cantons, which remained Catholic. In war with them he lost his life; and after his death (1531) his sacramental doctrine rapidly disappeared from Swiss and Continental Protestantism,⁵ even as it failed to make headway in England.⁶ At his fall "the words of triumph and cursing used by Lutherans and others were shameful and almost inhuman."⁷ In the sequel, for sheer lack of a rational foundation, the other Protestant sects in turn fell to

¹ Chr. Sigwart, *Ulrich Zwingli, der Charakter seiner Theologie, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Pico von Mirandula*, 1855, pp. 14-26. Professor S. M. Jackson, *Huldreich Zwingli*, 1901, p. 85, *note*, states that Sigwart later modified his views.

² So states Melanchthon, cited by Professor Jackson, p. 85, *note*. Cp. pp. 201, 390-2.

³ Cited by Jackson, p. 316.

⁴ *Id.* p. 295.

⁵ *Id.* p. 361.

⁶ *Id.* p. 361, *note*.

⁷ *Id.* According to Heylyn, the Earl of Warwick countenanced the Zwinglians in his intrigues against the Protector Somerset; and their views were further welcomed by other nobles as making for the plundering of rich altars. *Hist. of the Reform. of the Ch. of Eng.* ed. 1849, *pref.* p. vii. But Heylyn appears to identify the Zwinglians at this stage with the Calvinists. Cp. p. x.

furious dissension and persecution, some apparently finding their sole bond of union in hatred of the rest.

1. See Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen*, 3te Aufl. Cap. 431, for a sample of Lutheran popery; and as to the strifes cp. C. Beard, *The Reformation*, as cited, pp. 182-3; Dunham, *History of the Germanic Empire*, 1835, iii, 115-120, 153, 169; Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, ed. 1848, iii, 155-162; A. F. Pollard, in "The Cambridge Modern History," vol. ii, *The Reformation*, ch. viii, pp. 277-9. In the last-cited compilation, however, the strifes of the Protestant sects are barely indicated.

As to Luther's attitude towards new science, see his derision of Copernicus, on scriptural grounds, in the *Table-Talk*, ch. 69, *Of Astronomy and Astrology*. The passage is omitted from the English translation in the Bohn Library, p. 341; and the whole chapter is dropped from the German abridgment published by Reclam. Melanchthon was equally unteachable, and actually proposed to suppress the new teachings by punitive methods. (*Initia Doctrinæ Physicæ*, cited by White, *Warfare of Science and Theology*, 1896, i, 127.) It has been loosely claimed for Luther that he was "an enemy to religious persecution" (Lieber, *Manual of Political Ethics*, 1839, pt. i, p. 329), when the only evidence offered is (*Id.* p. 205) that he declared against *killing* for heresy, because innocent men were likely to be slain—"Quare nullo modo possum admitttere, falsos doctores occidi." As early as 1524, renouncing his previous doctrine of non-coercion, he invoked the intervention of the State to punish blasphemy, declaring that the power of the sword was given by God for such ends (Bezold, p. 563). Melanchthon too declared that "Our commands are mere Platonic laws when the civil power does not give its support" (*Id.* p. 565).

A certain intellectual illusion is set up even by Bezold when he writes that in Luther's resort to physical force "the hierarchical principle had triumphed over one of the noblest principles of the Reformation." "The Reformation" had no principles. Among its promoters were professed all manner of principles. The Reformation was the outcome of all their activities, and to make of it an entity or even a distinct set of theories is to obscure the phenomena.

Such flaws of formulation, however, are trifling in comparison with the mis-statement of the historic fact which is still normal in academic as in popular accounts of the Reformation. It would be difficult, for instance, to give seriously a more misleading account of the Lutheran reformation than the proposition of Dr. Edward Caird that, "in thrusting aside the claim of the church to place itself between the individual and God,

Luther had proclaimed the emancipation of men not only from the leading strings of the Church, but, in effect, from all external authority whatever, and even, in a sense, from all merely external teaching or revelation of the truth" (*Hegel*, 1883, p. 18). Luther thrust his own Church precisely where the Catholic Church had been; bitterly denounced new heresies; and put the Bible determinedly "between the individual and God." In Luther's own day Sebastian Franck unanswerably accused him of setting up a paper Pope in place of the human Pope he had rejected. Luther's declaration was that "the ungodly papists prefer the authority of the church far above God's Word, a blasphemy abominable and not to be endured, wherewith.....they spit in God's face. Truly God's patience is exceeding great, in that they be not destroyed" (*Table Talk*, ch. i).

Another misconception is set up by Pattison, who seems to have been much concerned to shield Calvin from the criticism of the civilised conscience (see below, p. 464). He pronounces that Calvin's "great merit lies in his comparative neglect of dogma. He seized the idea of reformation as a real renovation of human character" (*Essays*, ii, 23). If so, the reformer can have had little satisfaction, for he never admitted having regenerated Geneva. But the claim that he "comparatively" neglected dogma is true only in the sense that he was more inquisitorially zealous about certain forms of private conduct than was Luther. It was in the name of dogma that he put Servetus and Gruet to death, exiled Castalio, imprisoned Bolsec, broke with old friends, and imperilled the entire Genevan polity. Pattison's praise would be much more appropriate to Zwingli.

Luther, though he would probably have been ready enough to punish Copernicus as a heretic, was saved the evil chance which befel Calvin of being put in a place of authority where he could in God's name commit judicial murder. Such an act it is that most directly connects Calvin's name with the history of freethought. Servetus was a reformer who went further than the others, grounding his rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity on the Bible itself, somewhat in the modern Unitarian manner, but with the difference that he accepted the early conception of a modal Trinity—or three God *aspects*—while rejecting that of three persons.¹ The whole Protestant

¹ Willis, *Servetus and Calvin*, 1877, pp. 50, 61, 309, etc.

world was of one opinion in desiring to suppress his anti-Trinitarian books—Luther calling the first horribly wicked ; Melanchthon writing to the Venetian Senate to warn them against letting it be sold.¹ It is significant of the random character of Protestant as of Catholic thought that Servetus, like Melanchthon, was a convinced believer in astrology,² while Luther on Biblical grounds rejected astrology and the Copernican astronomy alike, and held devoutly by the belief in witchcraft. The superiority of Servetus consists in his real scientific work—he having in part given out the true doctrine of the circulation of the blood³—and his objection to all persecution of heresy.⁴

Calvin's guilt in the matter begins with his devices to have Servetus seized by the Catholic authorities of Lyons⁵—to set misbelievers, as he regarded them, to slay the misbeliever—and his use of Servetus' confidential letters against him.⁶ He was not repelling a heresy from his own city, but heretic-hunting far away in sheer malignity. The Catholics were the less cruel gaolers, and let their prisoner escape, condemning him to death in absence. The later trial at Geneva is a classic document in the records of the cruelties committed in honour of chimeras ; and Calvin's part is the sufficient proof that the Protestant could hold his own with the Catholic Inquisitor in the spirit of hate.⁷ It has been urged, in his excuse, that the doctrines of Servetus were

¹ Willis, *Servetus and Calvin*, 1877, pp. 44, 49.

² *Id.* p. 117.

³ See the careful account of Dr. Austin Flint, of New York, in his pamphlet, *Rabelais as a Physiologist*, rep. from *New York Medical Journal* of June 29th, 1901.

⁴ Willis, p. 53.

⁵ *Id.* ch. xix. See the letter of Trie, given in Henry's *Life of Calvin* (Eng. trans. ii, 184-5) with the admission that Trie was in Calvin's counsels. Henry vainly endeavours to make light (pp. 181-2) of Calvin's written words to Farel concerning Servetus: "If he come I will never allow him, supposing my influence worth anything, to depart alive."

⁶ Willis, ch. xx. Cp. pp. 457, 503.

⁷ Ten years after the death of Servetus, Calvin calls him a "dog and wicked scoundrel" (Willis, p. 530); and in his *Commentary on Genesis* (i, 3, ed. 1838, p. 9) he says of him: "*Latrat hic obscoenus canis.*" And Servetus had asked *his* pardon at the end.

blasphemously put ; but in point of fact Calvin passed some of his bitterest denunciation on the statement, in a note in Servetus' edition of Ptolemy's *Geography*, that Judea is actually a barren and meagre country, and not "flowing with milk and honey." Despite the citation of ample proof, and the plea that the passage was drawn from a previous edition, it was by Calvin adjudged blasphemous in that it "necessarily inculpated Moses and grievously outraged the Holy Spirit."¹ The language of Calvin against Servetus at this point is utterly furious. Had Servetus chanced to maintain the doctrine of the earth's motion, he would certainly have been adjudged a blasphemer on that score also ; for in the Argument to his *Commentary on Genesis* (1563) Calvin doggedly maintains the Ptolemaic theory. His language tells of much private freethinking on the Mosaic doctrine, and his tone leaves no doubt as to how he would treat published heresy.

Even before this episode Calvin's passion of malevolence against his theological opponents in his own sect is such as to shock some of his adoring biographers.² All the Protestant leaders, broadly speaking, grew more intolerant as they grew in years—a fair test as between the spirit of dogma and the spirit of freethought. Calvin had begun by pleading for tolerance and clemency ; Luther, beginning as a humanitarian, soon came to be capable of hounding on the German nobility against the unhappy peasants ; Melanchthon, tolerant in his earlier days, applauded the burning of Servetus ;³ Beza laboriously defended the act. Erasmus stood for tolerance ; and Luther accordingly called him godless, an enemy of true religion, a slanderer of Christ, a Lucian, an Epicurean, and (by implication) the greatest knave alive.⁴

¹ White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, 1896, i, 113 ; Willis, *Servetus and Calvin*, p. 325.

² See Stähelin, *Johannes Calvin*, ii, 300–8.

³ Willis, pp. 47, 511.

⁴ *Table Talk*, ch. 43. Cp. Michelet's *Life of Luther*, Eng. trans. 1846, pp. 195–6 ; and Hallam, *Lit. Hist. of Europe*, i, 360–5. Michelet's later enthusiasm for Luther (*Hist. de France*, x, ch. v, ed. 1884, pp. 96–97) is oblivious of many of the facts noted in his earlier studies.

The burning of Servetus in 1553, however, marked a turning point in Protestant theological practice on the Continent. There were still to come the desperate religious wars in France, in which more than 300,000 houses were destroyed, and all civilisation was thrown back, both materially and morally ; and there was yet to come the still more appalling calamity of the Thirty Years' War in Germany—a result of the unstable conditions set up at the Reformation ; but theological human sacrifices were rapidly discredited. Servetus was not the first victim ; but he was nearly the last.

The effect of theological bias on moral judgment is interestingly exemplified in the comment of Mosheim on the case of Servetus. Unable to refer to the beliefs of deists or atheists without vituperation, Mosheim finds it necessary to add to his account of Servetus as a highly-gifted and very learned man the qualification : “ Yet he laboured under no small moral defects, for he was beyond all measure arrogant, and at the same time ill-tempered, contentious, unyielding, and a semi-fanatic.” Every one of these characterisations is applicable in the highest degree to Calvin, and in a large degree to Luther ; yet for them the ecclesiastical historian has not a word of blame.

Even among rationalists it has been not uncommon to make light of Calvin's crimes on the score that his energy maintained a polity which alone sustained Protestantism against the Catholic Reaction. This is the verdict of Michelet : “ The Renaissance, betrayed by the accident of the mobilities of France, turning to the wind of light volitions, would assuredly have perished, and the world would have fallen into the great net of the fishers of men, but for that supreme concentration of the Reformation on the rock of Geneva by the bitter genius of Calvin.” And again : “ Against the immense and darksome net into which Europe fell by the abandonment of France nothing less than this heroic seminary could avail ” (*Hist. de France*, vol. x, *La Réforme* : end of pref. and end of vol.). Though this verdict has been accepted by such thinkers as Pattison (*Essays*, ii, 30–32) and Mr. John Morley (Romanes Lecture on *Machiavelli*, 1877, p. 47), it is difficult to find for it any justification in history.

The nature of the proposition is indeed far from clear. Michelet appears to mean that Geneva saved Europe as constituting a political rallying-point, a nucleus for Protestantism. Pattison, pronouncing that “ Calvinism saved Europe ” (*Essays*,

ii, 32), explains that it was by "a positive education of the individual soul"; and that "this, and this alone, enabled the Reformation to make head against the terrible repressive forces brought to bear by Spain—the Inquisition and the Jesuits" (p. 32). The thesis thus vanishes in rhetoric, for it is quite impossible to give such a formula any significance in the light of the history of Protestantism in Britain, Scandinavia, Germany, and Holland. It implies that where Protestantism finally failed—as in Italy, France, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, Belgium, parts of Germany, and parts of Switzerland—it was because the individual spirit had not been educated enough, which is a mere omission to note the real economic and political causation.

If we revert to Michelet's claim, we get no more satisfaction. The very fact that Calvin's polity could subsist without any special military protection is the proof that it could have subsisted without the gross cruelty and systematic persecution which marked it out from the rest of the world. To say otherwise is to say that freedom and toleration are less attractive to men than ferocity, tyranny, and gloom. Calvin drove many men back to Catholicism, and had his full share in the mortal schism which set Calvinists and Lutherans at daggers drawn for a century, while Catholicism re-conquered Poland and Bohemia and Hungary, held France, and nearly re-conquered Lutheran Germany. There is no reason to suppose that the Reformation would have gone otherwise in Britain, Scandinavia, and Holland had Geneva gone as far in tolerance as it actually did in intolerance. To call it, as Michelet does, an "asylum," in view of Calvin's expulsion or execution of every man who dared to differ from him, is courageous.

At the close of his argument (p. 41), Pattison sums up that, "Greatly as the Calvinistic churches have served the cause of political liberty, they have contributed nothing to the cause of knowledge." The admission is in the main valid; but the claim will not stand, unless "political liberty" is to be newly defined. The Calvinistic rule at Geneva was from the first a class tyranny, which became more and more narrow in its social basis. The Calvinist clergy and populace of Holland turned their backs on republican institutions, and became violent monarchists. The Calvinists of England and Scotland were as determined persecutors as ever lived. And, indeed, how should liberty anywhere flourish when knowledge is trodden under foot?

In 1550 Calvin had secured the execution of JACQUES GRUET, of the "Libertine" faction in Geneva, who, on

being arrested for issuing placards against the clerical junto in power, was found to have among his papers some revealing his disbelief in the Christian religion.¹ According to one narrative, he had copied with his own hand and circulated in Geneva the mysterious treatise, *De Tribus Impostoribus*, the existence of which, at that period, is very doubtful.² On the strength of this and other cases the *Libertines* have been sometimes supposed to be generally unbelievers; but there is no more evidence for this than for the general ascription to them of licentious conduct. It appears indeed that at that time the name *Libertine* was not recognised as a label for all of Calvin's political opponents, but was properly reserved for the sect so-called;³ but even a vindicator of Calvin admits that "it is undeniable that the Libertines of 1555 were the true political representatives of the patriots of 1530."⁴ The presumption is that the political opposition included the more honest and courageous men of liberal and tolerant tendencies, as Calvin's own following included men of "free" life.⁵ The really antinomian *Libertini* of the period were to be found among the pantheistic-Christian sect or school so called, otherwise known as Spirituals, who seem to have been a branch of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, or fraternity of the "Spirit of Liberty." These Calvin denounced in his manner; but in 1544 he had also forced into exile his

¹ Henry, *Das Leben Calvins*, Beilage 16 (Appendix not given in the English translation); Stähelin, *Johannes Calvin*, 1863, i, 399-400; Audin, *Histoire de Calvin*, as cited, pp. 279-287. Three years after Gruet's death a second collection of his papers was found, and burnt by the hangman.

² Henry, *Life of Calvin*, Eng. trans. ii, 47-48. Of the treatise in question, which was not published till long afterwards, Henry says on one page that it "professes to show tranquilly, and with regret, but without abuse," the fraudulent character of the three revealed religions. On the next page he asks: "What are all the anti-Christian writings of the French Revolution compared with the hellish laughter which seemed to peal from its pages?"

³ Dändliker, *Geschichte der Schweiz*, 1884-87, ii, 559.

⁴ Mark Pattison, *Essays*, 1889, ii, 37.

⁵ Dändliker, as cited, endorsing Roget. Cp. Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, i, 306, and Hamilton, *Discus. on Philos. and Lit.* 2nd ed. p. 497, as to the "dissolution of morals" in the Lutheran world.

former friend, Sebastian Castalio (or Castalion; properly Chatillon), master of the public school at Geneva, for simply rejecting his doctrine of absolute predestination, striving to have him driven in turn from Basel; and in 1551 he had caused to be imprisoned and banished a physician and ex-Carmelite, Jerome Bolsec, for publicly denying the same dogma, whereupon Bolsec returned to Catholicism,¹ as did many others. Ultimately Bolsec took his revenge on Calvin in an unmeasured attack on his private character, which has been treated as untrustworthy by the more moderate Catholic scholars who deal with the period; and which is probably on all fours with Calvin's own unscrupulous charges against the "Libertines" who opposed him.

The tenets of the *Libertini* are somewhat mystifying, as handled by Calvin and his biographer Henry, both alike animated by the *odium theologicum* in the highest degree. By Calvin's account they were mystical Christians, speaking of Christ as "the spirit which is in the world and in us all," and of the devil and his angels as having no proper existence, being identical with the world and sin. Further, they denied the eternity of the human soul and the freedom of the will; and Calvin charges them with subverting alike belief in God and morality (Henry, *Life of Calvin*, Eng. trans. ii, 45-46). The last charge could just as validly be brought against his own predestinarianism; and as regards ethics we find Calvin alternately denouncing the Libertines for treating all sin as unpardonable, and for stating that in Christ none could sin. Apparently he gives his inferences as their doctrines; and the antinomianism which, in the case of the trial of Madame Ameaux, Henry identifies with pantheism, was by his own showing of a Christian cast. Little credit, accordingly, can be given to his summing up that among the Libertines of Geneva there exhibited itself "a perfectly-formed anti-Christianity," which he calls "a true offspring of hell" (ii, 49). The residuum of truth appears to be that in the pantheism of this sect, as Neander says concerning the Brethren of the Free Spirit among the Beghards, there were "the *foretokens* of a thoroughly anti-Christian tendency, hostile to everything supernatural, every sentiment of a God above the world; a tendency which

¹ Mosheim, 14 Cent. sec. iii, Pt. ii, ch. ii, §§ 38-41; Audin, *Histoire de Calvin*, cc. xxix, xxx.

contained.....the *germ* of absolute rationalism " (*Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Torrey's trans. ix, 536). Pantheism, logically extended, obviously reduces the supernatural and the natural to unity, and is thus atheistic. But that the pantheists of Geneva in Calvin's day reached logical consistency is incredible. The Libertine sect, in all likelihood, was only partially antinomian, and only in very small part consciously anti-Christian.

At this period, on the same issue of predestination, Calvin broke utterly with one of his closest friends, Jacques de Bourgogne, Sieur de Falais.¹ It seemed as if the Protestant polity were breaking up in a continuous convulsion of dogmatic strife; and Melanchthon wrote to Bucer in despair over the madness and misery of a time in which Geneva was returning to the fatalism of the Stoics, and imprisoning whosoever would not agree with Zeno.² By this time it must have been clear to many that behind the strifes of raging theologians there lay a philosophic problem which they could not sound. It is therefore not surprising to learn that already at Basel University, as fifty years before at Erfurt, there was a latitudinarian group of professors who aimed at a universal religion, and came near "naturalism" in the attempt;³ while elsewhere in Switzerland, as we shall see later, there grew up the still freer way of thought which came to be known as Deism.

The later treatment of Bernardino Ochino, who had turned Protestant after being vicar-general of the Capuchin order, shows the slackening of ferocity after the end of Servetus. Ochino in a late writing ventured guardedly to suggest certain relaxations of the law of monogamy—a point on which some Lutherans went much further than he—and was besides mildly heretical about the Trinity.⁴ He was in consequence expelled with his family from the canton of Zürich (1563), at the age of seventy-six. Finding Switzerland wholly inhospitable, and being driven by the Catholics from Poland, where he had sought to join

¹ Stähelin, ii, 293–301.

² *Id.* 293.

³ *Id.* 304.

⁴ Benrath, *Bernardino Ochino of Siena*, Eng. trans. 1876, pp. 268–272, 287–292.

the Socinians, he went to die in Moravia.¹ This was no worse treatment than Lutherans and Calvinists normally meted out to each other;² and several of the Italian Protestants settled at Geneva who leant to Unitarian views—among them Gribaldo, Biandrata, and Alciati—found it prudent to leave that fortress of orthodoxy, where they were open to official challenge.³ Finally, when the Italian Valentinus Gentilis, the anti-Trinitarian, variously described as Tritheist, Deist, and Arian, uttered his heresies at Geneva, he was allowed, after an imprisonment, to go thence with his life, but was duly burned at Berne in 1566.⁴

This ends the Swiss era of theological murder; but a century was to pass before sectarian hatreds subsided, or the spirit of persecution was brought under control of civilisation. The Protestant Bibliolatry, in short, was as truly the practical negation of freethought and tolerance as was Catholicism itself; and it was only their general remoteness from each other that kept the different reformed communities from absolute war where they were not, as in Switzerland, held in check by the dangers around them.⁵ As it was, they had their full share in the responsibility for the furious civil wars which so long convulsed France, and for those which ultimately reduced Germany to the verge of destruction, arresting her civilisation for over a hundred years.

To sum up. In Germany Protestantism failed alike as a moral and as an intellectual reform. The lack of any general moral motive in the ecclesiastical revolution is sufficiently proved by the general dissolution of conduct which, on the express admission of Luther,

¹ McCrie, *Hist. of the Ref. in Italy*, 1827, pp. 391–6; Audin, ch. xxxv; Benrath, *Bernardino Ochino*, as cited, p. 297.

² Cp. Pusey, *Histor. Enquiry into Ger. Rationalism*, 1828, p. 14 sq; Beard, p. 183.

³ Stähelin, ii, 337. Biandrata went to Poland, where, as we saw (p. 435), he turned persecutor, and then Protestant.

⁴ Mosheim, 16 Cent. sec. iii, Pt. ii, ch. iv, § 6; Audin, pp. 394–9; Aretius, *Short Hist. of Val. Gentilis*, Eng. trans. 1696; Stähelin, ii, 338–345.

⁵ See Stähelin, ii, 293, 304, etc.

followed upon it.¹ This was quite apart from the special disorders of the Anabaptist movement, which, on the other hand, contained elements of moral and religious rationalism, as against Bibliolatry, that have been little recognised.² Of that movement the summing-up is that, like the Lutheran, it turned to evil because of sheer lack of rationalism. Among its earlier leaders were men such as Denk, morally and temperamentally on a higher plane than any of the Lutherans. But Anabaptism too was fundamentally scriptural and revelationist, not rational; and it miscarried in its own way even more hopelessly than the theological "reform." Lutheranism, renouncing the rational and ethical hope of social betterment, ran to insane dissension over irrational dogma; Anabaptism, ignorantly attaching the hope of social betterment to religious delusion, ran to irrational social schemes, ending in anarchy, massacre, and extinction. But the Lutheran failure was intellectually and morally no less complete. Luther was with good reason ill at ease about his cause when he died in 1546; and Melanchthon, dying in 1560, declared himself glad to be set free from the *rabies theologorum*.³ ✓

The test of the new regimen lay, if anywhere, in the University of Wittenberg; and there matters were no better than anywhere else.⁴ German university life in general went from bad to worse till a new culture began slowly to germinate after the Thirty Years' War;⁵ and the germs came mainly from the neighbouring nations. German Switzerland exhibited similar symptoms, the Reformation being followed by no free intellectual life, but by a tyranny identical in spirit and method with

¹ Cp. Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen*, 3te Aufl. Cap. 417; A. F. Pollard, in "The Cambridge Modern History," vol. ii, *The Reformation*, ch. vii, p. 223; *The Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 6-8.

² See Beard, Hibbert Lectures on *The Reformation*, pp. 189-190, 196. The same avowal was made in the eighteenth century by Mosheim (16 Cent. sec. iii, Pt. ii, § 5).

³ Adam, *Vite german. philosophorum*, p. 934, cited by Amand Saintes, *Hist. crit. du rationalisme en Allemagne*, 1841, p. 25, note.

⁴ K. von Raumer, as cited, pp. 32-37.

⁵ *Id.* pp. 42-52; Pusey, as cited, p. 112.

that of Rome.¹ It rests, finally, on the express testimony of leading Reformers that the main effect of the Reformation in the intellectual life of Germany was to discredit all disinterested learning and literature. Melancthon in particular, writing at dates as far apart as 1522 and 1557, repeatedly and emphatically testifies to the utter disregard of erudition and science in the interests of pietism, corroborating everything said to the same effect by Erasmus.²

On the social and political side the rule of the Protestant princes was not only as tyrannous but as indecorous as that of their Catholic days, each playing Pope in his own dominions;³ and their clergy were not in a position to correct them. Menzel notes that the normal drunkenness of the Protestant aristocracy at this period made current in Europe the expression "a German swine."³ And whereas Germany before the Reformation was at various points a culture force for Europe—whence the readiness in other nations at first to follow the Lutheran lead—it progressively became more and more of an object-lesson of the evils of heresy, thus fatally weakening the cause of Protestantism in France, where its fortunes hung in the balance.

Intellectually, there was visible retrogression. It is significant that throughout the sixteenth century most of the great scientific thinkers and the freethinkers with the strongest bent to new science lived in the Catholic world. Rabelais and Bruno were priests, as was Copernicus; Galileo had never withdrawn from the church which humiliated him; even Kepler returned to the Catholic environment after professing Protestantism. Gilbert and Harriott thrived in the as yet un-Puritanised atmosphere of Elizabethan England, before the age of Bibliolatry. It would seem as if the spirit of Scripturalism, invading the very centres of thought, were more fatal to original intellectual life than the more

¹ Dändliker, *Geschichte der Schweiz*, ii, 556-9, 622 sq., 728-9.

² See the extracts in Beard's Hibbert Lectures, pp. 340-1.

³ Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen*, Cap. 417.

external interferences of Catholic sacerdotalism.¹ In the phrase of Arnold, Protestantism turned the key on the spirit, where Catholicism was normally content with an outward submission to its ceremonies, and only in the most backward countries, as Spain, destroyed entirely the atmosphere of mental intercourse.

The clerical resistance to new science, broadly speaking, was more bitter in the Protestant world than in the Catholic ; and it was merely the relative lack of restraining power in the former that made possible the later scientific progress. At Wittemberg, during Luther's life, Reinhold did not dare to teach the Copernican astronomy ; Rheticus had to leave the place in order to be free to speak ; and in 1571 the subject was put in the hands of Peucer, who taught that the Copernican theory was absurd. Finally, the rector of the university, Hensel, wrote a text-book for schools, entitled *The Restored Mosaic System of the World*, showing with entire success that the new doctrine was unscriptural.² A little later the Lutheran superintendent, Pfeiffer, of Lubeck, published his *Pansophia Mosaica*, insisting on the literal truth of the entire Genesiac myth.³ In the next century Calovius (1612-1686), who taught successively at Königsberg, Dantzic, and Wittemberg, maintained the same position, contending that the story of Joshua's staying the sun and moon refuted Copernicus.⁴ When Pope Gregory XIII, following an impulse abnormal in his world, took the bold step of rectifying the Calendar (1584), the Protestants in Germany and Switzerland vehemently resisted the reform, and in some cities would not tolerate it,⁵ thus refusing, on theological

¹ "There is much reason to believe that the fetters upon scientific thought were closer under the strict interpretation of Scripture by the early Protestants than they had been under the older church" (White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, i, 212).

² White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, i, 129.

³ *Id.* i, 213.

⁴ *Id.* p. 147.

⁵ Menzel, Cap. 431 ; Dändliker, *Geschichte der Schweiz*, 1884, ii, 743. The cantons of Glarus, Outer Appenzell, St. Gall, and the Grisons formally rejected the Gregorian Calendar. *Id. ib.* Zschokke (*Des*

grounds, the one species of coöperation with Catholicism that lay open to them. And the anti-scientific attitude persisted for over a century in Switzerland as in Scotland. At Geneva, J.-A. Turretin (1671–1737), writing after Kepler and Newton had done their work, laboriously repeated the demonstration of Calovius, and reaffirmed the positions of Calvin. So far as its ministers could avail, the Sacred Book was working the old effect.

§ 2. *England.*

Freethought gained permanently as little in England as elsewhere in the process of substituting local tyranny for that of Rome. Under Henry VIII anti-Romanist heretics were put to death on the old Romanist principles. In 1532, again, was burned James Bainham, who not only rejected the specially Catholic dogmas, but affirmed the possible salvation of unbelievers. Under the Protectorate which followed there was indeed much religious rationalism, evidently of continental derivation, which is discussed in the theological literature of the time. Roger Hutchinson, writing about 1550, repeatedly speaks of contemporary "Sadducees and Libertines" who say (1) "that all spirits and angels are no substances, but inspirations, affections, and qualities"; (2) "that the devil is nothing but *nolitum*, or a filthy affection coming of the flesh"; (3) "that there is neither place of rest nor pain after this life; that hell is nothing else but a tormenting and desperate conscience; and that a joyful, quiet, and merry conscience is heaven."

See *The Image of God, or Layman's Book*, 1550, ch. xxiv: Parker Society's rep. 1842, pp. 134, 138, 140. Cp. p. 79 and Sermon II. on The Lord's Supper (*Id.* p. 247) as to "Julianites" who "do think mortal *corpo*, mortal *anima*." To the year 1550 is also assigned the undated work of Veron or Vernon, *A Fruitfull Treatise of Predestination and of the Divine Providence of God*,

Schweizerlands Geschichte, 9te Ausg. 1853, p. 179) implies that the Protestants in general ignored it. Ranke (*Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. trans. 1-vol. ed. p. 108) mentions that "all Catholic nations took part in this reform."

with an Apology of the same against the swynishe gruntinge of the Epicures and Atheystes of oure time. There was evidently a good deal of new rationalism, which has been generally ignored in English historiography. Its foreign source is suggested by the use of the term "Libertines," which derives from France and Geneva. See below, vol. ii, ch. xiii. The above-cited tenets are, in fact, partly identical with those of the *libertins* denounced at Geneva by Calvin.

Such doctrine cannot have been printed, and probably can have been uttered only by men of good status, as well as culture; and even by them only because of the weakness of the State Church in its transition stage. Yet heresy went still further among some of the sects set up by the Anabaptist movement, which in England as in Germany involved some measure of Unitarianism. A letter of Hooper to Bullinger in 1549 tells of "libertines and wretches who are daring enough in their conventicles not only to deny that Christ is the Messiah and Saviour of the world, but also to call that blessed Seed a mischievous fellow and deceiver of the world."¹ This must have been said with locked doors, for much milder heresy was heavily punished, the worst penalties falling upon that which stood equally with orthodoxy on Biblical grounds.

In 1541, under Henry VIII, were burned three persons "because they denied transubstantiation, and had not received the sacrament at Easter." See the letter of Hilles to Bullinger, *Original Letters*, as cited, i, 200. The case of Jean Bouchier or Bocher, burned in 1550, is well known. It is worth noting that the common charge against Cranmer, of persuading the young king to sign her death warrant, is false, being one of the myths of Foxe. The warrant was passed by the whole Privy Council, Cranmer not being even present. See the Parker Society's reprint of Roger Hutchinson, 1842, introd. pp. ii.-5. Hutchinson apparently approved; and it is significant of the clerical attitude of the time that he calls (*Image of God*, ch. xxx, p. 201) for the punishment of Anabaptists by death if necessary, but does not suggest it for "Sadducees and Libertines."

¹ *Original Letters relative to the English Reformation*, issued for the Parker Society, 1846, i, 66.

The Elizabethan archbishops and the Puritans were equally intolerant; and the idea of free inquiry was undreamt of. That there had been much private discussion in clerical circles, however, is plain from the 13th and 18th of the Thirty-nine Articles (1562), which repudiate natural morality and hold "accursed" those who say that men can be saved under any creed. This fulmination would not have occurred had the heresy not been pressing; but the "curse" would thenceforth set the key of clerical and public utterance.

Bishop Burnet (*Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*, Art. 18) has given currency to the pretence that the words "saved by the law" are meant to exclude the sense "saved in the law," the latter salvation being allowed as possible. That there was no such thought on the part of the framers of the Article is shown by the Latin version, where the expression is precisely "*in lege*." Burnet prints the Latin, yet utterly ignores its significance.

The Reformation, in fact, speedily over-clouded with fanaticism what new light of freethought had been glimmering before; turning into Bibliolaters those who had rationally doubted some of the Catholic mysteries, and forcing back into Catholic bigotry those more refined spirits who, like Sir Thomas More, had before been really in advance of their age intellectually and morally, and desired a transmutation of the old system rather than its overthrow. Nothing so nearly rational as the *Utopia* (1515-16) appeared again in English literature for a century: it is indeed, in some respects, a lead to social science in our own day. More, with all his spontaneous turn for pietism, had evidently drunk in his youth or prime¹ at some freethinking source, for his book recognises the existence of unbelievers in deity and immortality; and though he pronounces them unfit for political power, as did Milton, Locke, and Voltaire long after him, he stipulates that they be

¹ Book II of the *Utopia* was written at Antwerp, during his six months' stay there on an embassy.

tolerated.¹ Broadly speaking, the book is simply deistic. "From a world," says a popular historian, clerically trained—"from a world where fifteen hundred years of Christian teaching had produced social injustice, religious intolerance, and political tyranny, the humourist philosopher turns to a 'Nowhere' in which the efforts of mere natural human virtue realised those ends of security, equality, brotherhood, and freedom, for which the very institution of society seems to have been framed."² In his own case, however, we see the Nemesis of the sway of feeling over judgment, for, beginning by keeping his prejudice above the reason of whose teaching he is conscious, he ends by becoming a blind religious polemist and a bitter persecutor.³

It is in the wake, then, of the overthrow of Catholicism in the second generation that a far-reaching freethought begins to be heard of in England; and this clearly comes by way of new continental and literary contact, which would have occurred in at least as great a degree under Catholicism, save in so far as unbelief was facilitated by the state of indifference which among the upper classes was the natural sequel of the shameless policy of plunder and the oscillation between Protestant and Catholic forms. And it was finally in this negative way only that Protestantism furthered freethought anywhere.

§ 3. *The Netherlands.*

Hardly more fortunate was the earlier course of things intellectual after the Reformation in the Netherlands, where by the fifteenth century remarkable progress had

¹ B. ii, sec. "Of the Religions" (Arber's ed. pp. 143-7; Professor Morley's ed. pp. 151-3).

² J. R. Green, *Short History of the English People*, ch. vi, § 4: 1881 ed. p. 311. Compare Green's whole estimate. Michelet's hostile criticism (x, 356) is surprisingly inept. For the elements of naturalism in the *Utopia*, see B. II, sections "Of their Journeying" and "Of the Religions."

³ Cp. Isaac Disraeli's essay, "The Psychological Character of Sir Thomas More," in the *Amenities of Literature*, and the present writer's essay, "Culture and Reaction," in *Essays in Sociology*, vol. i.

been made alike in science and the arts, and where Erasmus acquired his culture and did his service to culture's cause. The fact that Protestantism had to fight for its life against Philip was of course not the fault of the Protestants ; and to that ruinous struggle is to be attributed the arrest of the civilisation of Flanders. But it lay in the nature of the Protestant impulse that, apart from the classical culture which in Holland was virtually a successful industry, providing editions for all Europe, it should turn all intellectual life for generations into vain controversy. The struggle between reform and Popery was followed by the struggle between Calvinism and Arminianism ; and the second was no less bitter if less bloody than the first,¹ the religious strife passing into civil feud. Grotius, the most distinguished Dutch scholar and the chief apologist of Christianity in his day, had to seek refuge, on his escape from prison, in Catholic France, whose king granted him a pension. The circumstance which in Holland chiefly favoured freethought, the freedom of the press, was, like the great florescence of the arts in the seventeenth century, a result of the whole social and political conditions, not of any Protestant belief in free discussion. That there were freethinkers in Holland in and before Grotius' time is implied in the pains he took to defend Christianity ; but that they existed in despite of the ruling Protestantism is proved by the fact that they did not venture to publish their opinions. In the end, Grotius and Casaubon alike recoiled from the narrow Protestantism around them, which had so sadly failed to realise their hopes.² "In 1642 Grotius had become wholly averse to the Reformation. He thought it had done more harm than good"; and had he lived a few years longer he would probably have become a Catholic.³

¹ Cp. T. C. Grattan, *The Netherlands*, 1830, pp. 231-243.

² Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 406-416 ; Pattison, *Isaac Casaubon*, 2nd ed. pp. 447-8. As to Casaubon's own intolerance, however, see p. 446.

³ Hallam, ii, 411, 416.

§ 4. *Conclusion.*

Thus concerning the Reformation generally "we are obliged to confess that, especially in Germany, it soon parted company with free learning; that it turned its back upon culture; that it lost itself in a maze of arid theological controversy; that it held out no hand of welcome to awakening science. Presently we shall see that the impulse to an enlightened study and criticism of the Scriptures came chiefly from heretical quarters; that the unbelieving Spinoza and the Arminian Le Clerc pointed the way to investigations which the great Protestant systematisers thought neither necessary nor useful. Even at a later time it has been the divines who have most loudly declared their allegiance to the theology of the Reformation who have also looked most askance at science, and claimed for their statements an entire independence of modern knowledge."¹ In fine, "to look at the Reformation by itself, to judge it only by its theological and ecclesiastical development, is to pronounce it a failure"; and the claim that "to consider it as part of a general movement of European thoughtis at once to vindicate its past and to promise it the future"—this amounts merely to avowing the same thing. Only as an eddy in the movement of freethought is the Reformation intellectually significant. Politically it is a great illustration of the potency of economic forces.

While, however, the Reformation in itself thus did little for the spirit of freethought, substituting as it did the arbitrary standard of "revelation" for the not more arbitrary standard of papal authority, it set up outside its own sphere some new movements of rational doubt which must have counted for much in the succeeding period. It was not merely that, as we shall see, the bloody strifes of the two churches, and the quarrels of the Protestant sects among themselves, sickened many

¹ Beard, as cited, p. 298.

thoughtful men of the whole subject of theology; but that the disputes between Romanists and anti-Romanists raised difficult questions as to the bases of all kinds of belief. As always happens when established beliefs are long attacked, the subtler spirits in the conservative interest after a time begin putting in doubt beliefs of every species; a method often successful with those who cannot carry an argument to its logical conclusions, and who are thus led to seek harbour in whatever credence is on the whole most convenient; but one which puts stronger spirits on the reconsideration of all their opinions. Thus we find Daillé, at the outset of his work *On the True Use of the Fathers*,¹ complaining that when Protestants quote the Scriptures some Romanists at once ask "whence and in what way those books may be known to be really written by the prophets and apostles whose names and titles they bear." This challenge the Protestants did not as a rule attempt to meet, save in the fashion of La Placette, who in his work *De insanabili Ecclesiae Romanae Scepticismis* (1688)² undertakes to show that Romanists themselves are without any grounds of certitude as to the authority of the church. But we shall find, not only in the skepticism of Montaigne, which is historically a product of the wars of religion in France, but in the more systematic and more cautious argumentation of the abler Protestants of the seventeenth century, a measure of general rationalism much more favourable alike to natural science and to Biblical and ethical criticism than had been the older environment of authority and tradition, brutal sacerdotalism, and idolatrous faith. Men continued to hate each other religiously for trifles, to quarrel over gestures and vestures, and to wrangle endlessly over worn-out dogmas; but withal new and vital heresies were set on foot; new science generated new doubt; and under the shadow of the aging tree of

¹ In French, 1631; in Latin, 1656, amended.

² Translated into English in 1688 and into French under the title *Traité du Pyrrhonisme de l'église romaine*, by N. Chalaire, Amsterdam, 1721.

theology there began to appear the growths of a new era. As Protestantism had come outside the "universal" church, rearing its own tabernacles, so freethought came outside both, scanning with a deepened intentness the universe of things. And thus began a more vital innovation than that dividing the Reformation from the Renaissance, or even that dividing the Renaissance from the Middle Ages.

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END OF VOL. I.

